



# 2024

## Annual Report



*a story of*  
**Faithfulness**

# Letter from Tristan Ellett

## CHAIR OF CHURCH COUNCIL

Greetings Brothers and Sisters!

As you read through the pages of our 2024 Annual Report I hope that you will be filled with joy for the way God is at work at NewHope. It's wonderful to see how He is using all of us to shine His light and love in the world, and we are truly blessed by the service of our amazing staff team. As members, supporters, leaders, staff, councillors, and friends of NewHope, we are on an incredible journey together. Serving alongside one another for His glory is a privilege we all share. Ephesians 3 verse 20 captures this so well; "Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." Amen!

The NewHope Church Council is made up of 7 elected council members, along with our Senior Pastor and our Executive Pastor. As a team, the church council works hard year round to serve NewHope by providing strong governance and strategy to enable NewHope to flourish. Please continue to pray for our Church Council and the important work that is undertaken, especially in this season of succession. It is our hope that this work allows for what Paul describes in Philippians 1 verses 9-11: "I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God."

For over 29 years, NewHope has been incredibly blessed by the leadership and service of our Senior Pastor, Allan Demond. In 2024, it was announced that Allan's season will come to a close in 2025. We have so much to celebrate and are so grateful to Allan for his amazing leadership! For all the right reasons 2024 has required the Church Council, and in particular the elected Church Council members, to focus much time and effort on our succession journey. It is a joy to share that the unity we see in this work at all levels and throughout NewHope, continues to inspire us. From the very beginning of this journey, we have been praying for and actively seeking God's unity in this important time. The words of David in Psalms 133 are so important in this season: "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

Our succession work in 2024 included wonderful engagement from across our whole community (such as the Church Engagement Forum on 19 June, the Church wide succession survey, Chat with Council Sessions, and countless conversations and emails) which resulted in our Church and Pastor Profile. This enabled the formal search process to commence as it did in 2024. We are grateful for and humbled by the deep and thoughtful engagement of members, staff, and friends of NewHope journeying together, and contributing their time, insights, and promptings from God. The elected Church Council members are accountable for this process and have all lent in deeply and directly to help foster the best outcome possible, along with the invaluable support and guidance from the BUV, and the many hours contributed by the Senior Pastor Search Committee. God is good, always, and we are seeking His will in every step of the succession journey. There is much more work still to be done and we are committed to doing this together.

The heart and mission of NewHope remains unchanged! You can learn more about our mission, vision and values on our website. Despite the tough cost-of-living pressures affecting us all, we have been blessed to maintain a healthy financial position in 2024. Praise God!

Mission, Vision  
& Values.

Tap to view or  
scan the QR code.



Finally, thank you for your incredible support of NewHope! NewHope is a vibrant, faith-filled community where we shine God's love every day, growing together in faith and understanding. From morning prayer to evening worship, and everything in between, there is so much to celebrate and be grateful for!

God Bless

Tristan Ellett

NewHope Church Council Chair

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# Letter from Allan Demond

## SENIOR PASTOR

Dear NewHope Members and Supporters,

It is a joy to serve together in God's Kingdom at NewHope. I am grateful for so many things throughout 2024. We celebrate God's faithfulness to this church and we praise him for his promise of bounty and blessing.

Duet 28:12 "The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty ... to bless all the work of your hands."

Thank you for taking up this Annual Report and giving it your time and attention. I hope it will encourage you even as it informs you.

Your faithful support is key to the growth, blessing and fruitfulness that we are celebrating today with full hearts. I encourage you to read this annual report with a prayerful passion to see and celebrate more of the Lord at work in our midst.

### **Preaching, Prayer & Praise in 2024**

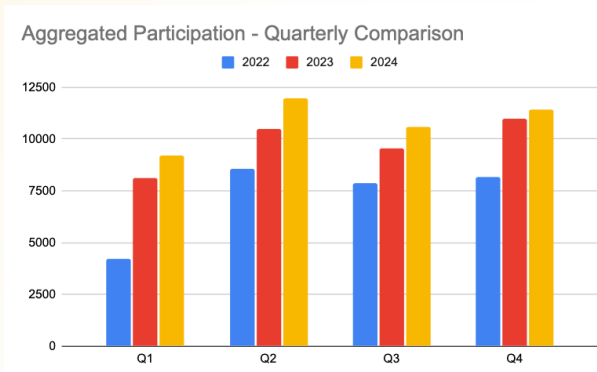
There is much to celebrate at the Core of NewHope as we look back on 2024. Our strategic intentions – Unity, Engagement, Impact – were each realised in encouraging ways. You will see this as you read on. The driver for so much of this good work was the spiritual growth in many individual lives, which we came together to celebrate constantly throughout the year.

- In 2024 we enjoyed four engaging teaching series. Many of us will be able to recall with gratitude, moments of insight, renewal, healing, dedication and blessing as we revisit and reflect on these themes.
  - Living in The Kingdom of God
  - Unveiled: An Exposition of The Book of Revelation
  - We Are Disciples: Gifted and Growing
  - Sacred Memories
- We began 2024 reading a great book together, entitled: "Praying Like Monks, Living like Fools", by Tyler Staton.
- My Launch Day message (Sunday 28 Jan 2024) was entitled 'Leading on Our Knees' and the church has responded so wonderfully to this charge. New prayer groups were birthed, the various prayer teams grew in number, we enjoyed a host of special prayer and worship events, and we saw countless moments of breakthrough.
- It was another year of nurturing the prophetic at NewHope as we entered a partnership with Accessible Prophecy and launched a learning Huddle.
- Many people participated in the invitation to 'disciple our desires' during Lent 2024. The practices of self-denial are a critical part of maturing as followers of Jesus.
- On a personal note I have greatly enjoyed my 30 minutes a day with Jesus throughout

2024. I used the One Year Chronological Bible and the PrayerMate app on my phone to enable a fantastic daily time of engagement with God. I cannot say enough good about the power of this discipline in my life. This coupled with the practice of embedding rhythms of quiet and rest is life-giving in the most wonderful ways.

### People, Programs and Impact in 2024

- In early January I met with Sally Agostino for the first of several conversations about coming to serve at NewHope. How pleased we all are that God has brought us together. Sally brings ministry experience and an abundance of gifts that are a blessing to NewHope. We celebrated her Induction as an Associate Pastor of our church on 12 May and her Ordination into Christian Ministry on 26 Oct.
- We enjoyed inspiring visits from Mercy Aitken (Bethlehem Bible College) and Elijah Brown (General Superintendent of the Baptist World Alliance) during the year.
- Our Chinese and Farsi congregations both grew in 2024 and we had the opportunity to share together in very moving testimonies and baptisms at several combined worship services throughout the year.
- There has been overall growth in participation at NewHope. This Annual Report is full of stories of ministry impact and kingdom outcomes. We praise God for changed (and changing) lives, for newly opened doors and for an abundance of opportunity – the fields are white for harvest!
- A huge thank you to my staff colleagues. I thank God every time I think of you and our partnership in the gospel. Your faith, love, hope and grace are constant. Your good work is a blessing to so many people and I know that God will remember the work of your hands. You can read about particular staff changes in 2024 in the HR report.
- And as always, a round of applause is due for the Church Council and in particular the Chair, Tristan Ellett, who give freely of their time and energy to serve NewHope. In 2024 the work of succession was added to an already full plate and the members of the Council stepped up faithfully. Thank you!



### About our Parish and me Personally

One of the very important things that is growing NewHope is our active commitment to collaborate with other churches in and for our neighbourhood. As Paul Sparks says in the book 'The New Parish' (which many of the local pastors have read together), 'The gospel becomes so much more tangible and compelling when the local church is actually a part of the community, connected to the struggles of the people'. NewHope is a lead participant in the collaborative work of 28 Churches here in Whitehorse demonstrating and declaring the gospel on the front lines of community. It is remarkable what God is doing. It has been my privilege to chair this work since 2019. You can explore more on the Whitehorse Churches Care website and visit the major project, 'The Community Space', in the Forest Hill Shopping Centre.

Whitehorse Churches Care.

Tap to view or scan the QR code.

In 2024 I served as Vice-Chair of Baptist World Aid (Australia), our national Baptist justice and development work, and I taught preaching at our Baptist College, Whitley. Late in 2024 Janet and I were privileged to visit biblical sites and mission work in Türkiye, where I led the tour group and gave bible studies. This was a wonderful experience. I always enjoy the privilege of investing in young leaders at NewHope and beyond, and of mentoring, discipling, preaching and teaching locally and interstate. The pastoral work never abates with the joy of weddings, the weight of funerals, the wonderful fellowship with groups, the delight of dedications, and all the one-on-one care and counsel, filling my diary and my heart.

On Sunday, 9 June 2024, I gave the following announcement.

*In June 2025, one year from now, I will have served NewHope for 30 years. With the Church Council's blessing, I will conclude, in my role as Senior Pastor, at that time.*

*There is so much to say, to celebrate, and to process. We have time. That's a whole year away. And I am eager to serve you all well through this period. At a later time I will share stories with you about the Lord's gentle leadership in Janet and my life and our readiness for a next season of ministry – perhaps coaching, teaching, writing and serving the wider church from a different seat – all in time, as the Lord wills.*

*Today I want you to know that my tank is full, my Spirit is at peace, my days are full of joy in the Lord, and my heart overflows with love for you all. This is the right time for change. I am praying for the exciting future that is ahead at NewHope.*

*The Church Council has a responsibility to lead the succession journey, and have asked that we allow ample time for an open and thorough process. This is wise and I know the Lord will be with us every step of the way.*

This set the stage for the last chapter of my service as Senior Pastor of NewHope. I am very grateful for the kind support Janet and I (and our family) have received from so many. Our sense of God's blessing coming towards us in this season, as a church and as individuals, grows by the minute and we give God thanks and praise.

## **THANK YOU**

I close with a heartfelt word of gratitude for your faithful support – with prayer, time, finances, energy, attention, affection and every form of involvement – that empowers the very good work of NewHope. Thank you so very much! I also celebrate the very significant individual contributions of NewHope people who volunteer in ministries well beyond our structures serving God's Kingdom in an endless variety of ways. Your work matters. May you know God's favour. May you experience his courage. And may you walk in his promises as you hold fast to this knowledge: Your work in the Lord is NEVER in vain.

The Lord keep you and bless you,  
Amen.

# Letter from Craig Neilson

## FINANCE DIRECTOR

I feel so very blessed to have stepped into the Finance Director role at the end of 2023 and to serve NewHope as part of the Church Council. It has been a privilege to serve our special NewHope community over the past year, and at such an important and exciting time as we journey through the senior pastor succession period together.

We are so grateful to the NewHope family who have given so generously, and 2024 was indeed a consolidation year of giving in all our different funds over the life of the church. This followed an encouraging 2023, a year of stabilisation as we entered into life post-COVID. God is so good!

In 2024, the team consistently communicated to the congregation in NewHope News as well as during worship services the progress made towards our giving target. The target was the approved budget amount plus the amount to breach the gap to get to a break even position for our NewHope Local (Ministry) Fund.

<b>NewHope Fund</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>2024 Target</b>	<b>2024 Actual</b>	<b>% of '24 Target</b>
Local (Ministry)	\$1,865,888	\$1,934,547	\$1,838,020	95%
Global(Mission)	\$80,000	\$83,500	\$98,373	118%
Tax Deductible	\$637,940	\$637,940	\$673,405	106%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,583,828</b>	<b>\$2,655,987</b>	<b>\$2,609,798</b>	<b>98%</b>

In 2024, local ministry offerings fell just short of target landing at 95%, but there is much to be thankful for given the tough times we were able to navigate through, across the COVID years.

Giving to our global ministries, which supports our global mission partners, had a very strong year which enabled additional projects for emergency assistance to be supported.

Tax deductible giving increased by 4% compared to 2023, exceeding our 2024 expectations, finishing 5% above our target. Use of these funds is primarily limited to NewHope's charity work through NewHope Community Care and cannot be used for other church activities.

The continuation of increased interest rates by the Reserve Bank did impact our cash flow again; however, it did not exceed our expected budgeted amounts. Once again, very pleasingly we met all loan repayment requirements from a capital reduction perspective.

Throughout the entire year, as was also the case in 2023, we did not have to access any funds from our reserves held with Bendigo Bank, which was certainly not the case for the previous few years.

The Finance Team submits monthly reports on all NewHope entities to the Church Council. These reports include operational income and expenses compared to the approved budget, asset and liability positions (including property loans with Bendigo Bank), cash flow status, timing differences, giving progress against budget and target, and any special reporting requests.

The 2024 financials for all NewHope entities will be audited once again by RDL ACCOUNTANTS in March 2025, to be presented to our members at the AGM in May 2025. The detailed financial statements will be available on our website after the AGM. You are always welcome to request detailed statements by contacting the NewHope office.

Visit the giving page on our website to familiarise yourself with all the possible giving opportunities at NewHope, including help on how to give and some frequently asked questions.



## Baptisms & Membership

### **Total Members on 31 Dec 2023 (as advised to BUV): 718**

Additions to Membership Roll during 2024

Baptisms: 31

Transfers In: 12

Profession: 3

Other: 1

### **Reductions to Membership Roll during 2024**

Transfers Out: 7

Resigned: 2

Reserve Roll: 3

Deaths: 8

### **Total Members on 31 December 2024: 745**

# Ministries

## WORSHIP

2024 was a fantastic year in worship ministry. We are so blessed with a wealth of talented people who are willing to serve our community every week. 2024 was filled with some wonderful services, particularly throughout the Christmas and Easter seasons, we enjoyed powerful times of worship at our Communion Thursday service, the reflective Good Friday morning service, and the joyful Easter Sunday services.



One of the outstanding highlights from 2024 was the worship event “The Longest Night.” A night of unceasing worship where we began worship in the auditorium at sunset at 5:08pm and continued all throughout the night until sunrise at 7:34am. This was a **greatly encouraging time spent in community** before the Lord. Our worship team did a wonderful job playing all through the whole night without stopping and many people from other churches came along and were deeply blessed.

Another great highlight of 2024 was towards the end of the year. There was a sense of great hunger and enthusiasm amongst our community to spend more time in worship together so some of our eager young adults on the worship team started “Overflow Worship Nights” every Thursday night from late October until Christmas. It’s so encouraging to see God stir in the hearts of the younger generations here at NewHope.

Throughout 2024 the worship team has also supported other ministry initiatives. We have been able to send a worship team to an ESA Camp, a CYC camp, and we’ve had a few of our team be a part of “Campfire Worship Nights” which is a non-denominational worship movement based in the eastern suburbs focussed towards serving young adults.



We also continue to see a healthy and thriving youth band who serve the youth ministry so well throughout the year. The younger generations seem to be getting more and more talented every year.

→ **15 New People**  
Joined the Worship Team

→ **20 People**  
Serving on the Worship Team  
each Sunday

## PRAYER MINISTRIES

In 2024 we saw the continued development of a healthy prayer culture at NewHope across various ministries and services. **The Sunday Altar Prayer Team** grew to approximately 40 people spread over the 3 different English speaking services. Our team grew mainly in the 5pm service as many of the young adults began to feel a calling on their life to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus and to step out in praying for others.

The Sunday Prayer Team was able to have a number of training sessions throughout the year, spending time learning and growing together. The team was also able to read through important guidelines to keep our space healthy and safe for all involved.

So many salvations, and physical and emotional healing, was witnessed in the last year. We thank God continually for his work in his people. One story was from a young adult who had been receiving weekly specialist care for a condition affecting her feet for a number of years. She would experience excruciating pain after standing for any length of time, unable to run and do the exercise that she loved. Whilst being prayed for, both of her feet were healed and Jesus filled her with joy in an instant, which continues to show in her life.

Towards the end of 2024 there was a stirring on our hearts to recommence the monthly **Prayer and Worship Nights**. These nights are beautiful gatherings of people - from NewHope and other churches - with the desire to slow down, worship at an unhurried pace, and share stories of God's goodness to encourage each other.

**NewHope Prayer Ministry** appointments continue to minister to people's hearts. At each 2-hour appointment, in-person or online, the Holy Spirit reveals, heals and begins to restore what has been lost or stolen. It's a place for those struggling to feel the presence of God to encounter Jesus like they haven't before.

In 2024, there were a team of 24 who either ministered to clients directly or prayed over each session. We had around 217 appointments with people in Melbourne, interstate and from overseas.

Our team receives training once a term on various aspects of prayer ministry and we were privileged and blessed to have Sandra Sellmer Kirsten from Elijah House New Zealand come to Melbourne in August.

**Weekday prayer gatherings** at NewHope have flourished greatly in the past 12 months. The people of NewHope are so eager to join together in prayer and we now have prayer gatherings in the building every weekday! We are so encouraged to see God moving in this way.

The **Wednesday Online Prayer** group continued with around 12 people regularly joining in prayer on Zoom. This has continued to be an amazing time to pray specifically for the church, its ministries and its people. We are so grateful to hear from the leaders of our church about prayer needs in their ministries.

All Praise and Glory belongs to our Saviour, Lord and King, Jesus! We are so blessed to see him continuing to grow a culture of prayer and faithfulness at NewHope.

## CONNECT TEAM

The Connect team at NewHope is a vibrant, intergenerational group with a heart for welcoming and connecting with everyone who walks through our doors. This year, we've seen some new members join our existing teams, and together we've continued to provide essential support for the operational aspects of our Sunday services. This includes helping newcomers navigate the building, as well as facilitating communion and offering collections.

We were also excited to continue our support of the Year 6's from Kids Church by giving them an opportunity to serve in various ministries. It's a wonderful way to help the next generation get a taste of serving and being part of the church community.

One of the highlights this year was the introduction of our Young Adult Small Groups being rostered to serve together on the Connect team at the 5pm service. This initiative has brought an infusion of joy and energy to the foyer as people arrive for the service. It's also a great way for small groups to bond outside of their regular meeting time, while serving together in a meaningful way.

## ALPHA

2024 was another significant year for Alpha at NewHope, with a variety of courses and exciting developments. In Term 1, we kicked off an English Alpha Course, mostly hosted on Zoom, which was hosted by Phil & Effie. We had 13 participants sign up for the course.

In April, the Chinese congregation hosted their own Alpha Course in Term 2, which wrapped up on April 20. A total of 45 people participated, including 17 newcomers who were part of the Learn English program at NewHope and our Chinese outreach at Box Hill. This course resulted in powerful baptisms and impactful testimonies.

Term 3 saw another English Alpha Course run.

This course had 12 participants who engaged in meaningful discussions, challenges around reading the Bible, praying, and opening their hearts to Jesus. Most attendees were from outside NewHope, and many joined in prayer on the final night, eagerly asking, "Come, Holy Spirit," with support from our Prayer Team. Term 3 also featured Youth Alpha, where 14 Grade 6 students participated, with 8 leaders from various generations!

In September 2024, the Chinese Team ran Alpha once again, this time with 26 participants (45 in total, including leaders and participants).

It was a year of growth, transformation, and powerful encounters, and we're excited to see what God has in store for 2025!

→ **71 Chinese Alpha Participants**

→ **25 English Alpha Participants**

→ **14 Youth Alpha Participants**

# NEWHOPE GLOBAL

In June/July an intergenerational group visited Thailand to spend time with Marcus & Michelle (Wycliffe Bible Translators) and Muana & Villy (Baptist Mission Australia). A recap of this mission trip can be viewed online.

Thailand Mission Trip  
Tap to view or scan the QR code.



We celebrated 50 years of God's faithfulness through the ministry of Phil & Carol Short (SIM). Many supporters, peers, family, and friends joined in a thanksgiving event on 31 August.


Rosanna Seah has been putting together our Global Prayer Notes, and we are thankful for her work over the years. Deb McQuilkin is now the coordinator and connects regularly with our Global Partners to provide our community with updates from their programs.

Four of our young adults are at different stages of discernment in terms of what an overseas mission could look like for them, and we continue to support each of these individuals in various ways. We are looking forward to seeing what God will do here.

We are also so encouraged to see that one of our NewHope Youth leaders from a number of years ago has joined the LOGOS HOPE ship through OM recently.

As we continue to support our Global Partners in the year to come, we'd like to thank Ben Everard and his family and we pray a farewell blessing over them as their support moves to their new home church.

2026 Thailand Trip  
Tap to view or scan the QR code.



The Expressions of Interest for the 2026 Thailand Trip can be lodged online. We invite you to visit the website and find out more.

→ **8 Global Mission Partners**

→ **\$98,373 Given**  
to the NewHope Global Mission Fund



## FARSI FRIENDSHIP PROJECT

The Farsi Friendship Project has been very successful this year. Sam continued disciplining and mentoring a group of leaders of underground churches inside Iran. Two of these leaders have allocated most of their time to sharing the gospel. Our messages reached over 5,000 people, and we've received many stories from individuals in Iran about how these messages helped them find true peace, hope, and freedom in Jesus Christ. One of these stories is about a man from an underground church in Iran, whom we'll call "J."

A few years ago, J was a successful businessman with his own workshop. His friend would sometimes talk to him about Jesus, but J wasn't interested and even made fun of him. One evening, J had a serious car accident, and as a result, he was unable to walk and had to stay home. He ended up spending all his savings over the next six months on medical treatments. Because of his injuries, he was no longer able to work or make money.

In his desperation, one night when he was feeling completely exhausted and hopeless, J and his wife prayed to God, asking why this had happened to them and how they would survive without any money. That night, J had a dream. He saw a man in his dream (whom he later realized was Jesus) who told him that God was with him and his family, and that He would provide for them.

The next day, J shared his dream with his wife, and she didn't take it seriously, saying it was just because they had prayed together. But that same afternoon, they got a phone call from his friend with good news. The friend had found J a job he could do from home, and even better, he received a payment in advance! The work was on some digital projects. When J told his friend about the dream, the friend reminded him of God's love for him and his family.

Today, J is one of the leaders of the underground church, boldly sharing about God's love and grace. Please keep J in your prayers.

→ **520 Messages**  
Created and distributed.

→ **5000+ People**  
Listening to each message

→ **11 Leaders**  
Being mentored in the  
underground church in Iran

## NEWHOPE GROUPS

In 2024 Groups continue to be at the core of discipleship across the life of NewHope. Many individuals found a sense of belonging within the church community through NewHope Groups. Over the year, 33 people were connected into a NewHope Group and 4 new groups started.

Grounded in our group leaders covenant, we continued to foster the health and vitality of groups, leaders and their relationship with pastors. Leaders were encouraged to grow spiritually and practically, engaging with Steve Gladen's 'Leading Small Groups with Purpose' among other resources in monthly Group leader emails. We met quarterly as Group leaders, spending time in fellowship and learning from one another.

After the launch of the Church Center App across NewHope at the start of the year, we took a significant step in utilising its features for small groups. Helping our leaders in caring for their people, and serving as a practical tool for resources and gathering information.

 **33 NewHope  
Small Groups**

 **14 Shift Youth  
Small Groups**

 **10 Young Adults  
Small Groups**

 **14 NewHope Kids  
Small Groups**

## MEN'S MINISTRY

2024 continued on from the great beginning and foundation that was made in 2023. Men's ministry has a high value and focus on creating great environments for connection between men. There is also a desire to make the ministry an easy first step into the church community for those who may not have been to church before. A key component is approachable events. The highlight moments from 2024 were the Men's Retreat and the Grand Final Breakfast. The Retreat was a fantastic weekend filled with water sports, hiking, camping, plenty of food, and some great stories. We had over 60 men come and camp over the Labour Day weekend at Lake Eildon near Mansfield. At the Grand Final breakfast we had a guest speaker, Stephen Lawrence, who was the 1991 Premiership winning ruckman from Hawthorn. His testimony of faith and football was a great encouragement to all. We had over 100 men attend this event with many of them being first time guests.

## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

This year, we had the privilege of hosting two memorable Women's Ministry events.

The first was a Retreat Day (Creation, Created, Creative), which began with a peaceful prayer walk at Ruffey Lake Park, followed by a morning tea at NewHope. We were then blessed to have Renee Lazaro from Crossway lead us in a time of teaching. After a delicious lunch, we enjoyed a fun and creative Paint'n'Sip session with Candy Mo. The day concluded with a cosy dinner and movie. A total of 39 women participated in a day filled with encouragement, creativity, intergenerational connection, and community.

Two women who attended the retreat particularly cherished the prayer walk and have continued to meet regularly throughout the year to walk and pray together.

Our second event was a Christmas Cookie Baking Day, where 20 women gathered in the café space to build gingerbread houses and bake nine different Christmas cookie recipes. Each woman went home with a decorated gingerbread house, a recipe booklet, and a sampler box of the cookies we baked. We also took time to reflect on the concept of hospitality—discussing how it differs from entertaining—and explored ways to welcome others with warmth and authenticity. The morning was filled with joy, laughter, and meaningful conversations as women connected over shared experiences and the joy of baking.



# Sacred Memories

## Val Wright

Thanks be to God for the amazing faith, and untiring work of our very first team of leaders, Alex Perrin, Ridley Kitchen, Alex Jamieson, Colin Arthur and others, plus their wonderful wives who all worked tirelessly in giving our Church a solid foundation. God clearly said, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church!' We have been so blessed by God and privileged to have been served by 3

wonderful Senior Pastors. Norman Wright, Jack Simmonds and Allan Demond. From that very first Sunday School gathering amongst the wood shavings of a not quite completed Church Hall, we have been led and challenged by God to fulfil His command to Go into all the world and preach the Gospel. My mind is full of blessings and memories as I look back over the years and I will be forever thankful that God chose this Church for me to serve Him.



*Middleborough Road Baptist Church - Opening*



*Dinner Tonite Chapel Choir*

## Glen Crothers

Dinner Tonite was a free Saturday night meal, guests were from all walks of life, some lonely, some living on their own, some sleeping rough.

Dinner Tonite regularly had 70-80 guests. For some it was their only contact with a church.

I remember the first night a newly arrived Chinese lady came in, this was the start of her journey into Christian faith. Today the angels in heaven are singing because she loves the Lord Jesus deeply. For this reason alone, it was all worthwhile.

## Lesley Cole

I came to Middleborough Road Baptist in 1953 at the age of four. So many of my Sacred Memories have been here. Playing the pedal pump organ for Sunday School; being commissioned as a Girls Brigade Officer; taking part in Gilbert and Sullivan productions; being baptised; meeting my husband Rob on a Mission Work Party and serving in Papua New Guinea with our young family. Another sacred moment for me was when my grandson Jesse Sharma (for whom we prayed and waited for 12 years) cut the ribbon for the opening of our new NewHope building! I thank God for the past, the present and am excited for the future.



*Gilbert & Sullivan. John Fearn Wannan and Mrs Brown in Trial by Jury c1961*

## Stuart & Norma Brown

Who can forget the children's talks by Charles Moss and Peter Humphries with the catch phrase, "Has anybody seen Peter?" and Judy Simpson's, "What's in My Bag?". Or the Sunday school anniversaries that happened every October. Six services over two Sundays, a tiered platform packed with people, great singing, special guests, and the church filled to capacity. We have so many memories of our time at NewHope, including the dedication of our first child on Mother's Day in 1965. Praise be to God.



*Sunday School Anniversary*

# **Multicultural Outreach**

## FARSI CONGREGATION

In 2024, we saw a growing number of new people joining our Farsi community. Many of them travel long distances to attend our Sunday services, small groups, and social gatherings. We also reorganised our Serve Team, and more volunteers are now actively serving the community. Two small groups and a new series of classes for new believers were started. Additionally, we launched a prayer and worship gathering in 2024.

This year, we celebrated six baptisms, and five people are currently taking our Farsi baptismal classes. We continued to publish daily podcasts and regular content, which had an audience of around 230 people.

## CHINESE CONGREGATION

The year 2024 has been another testament to God’s abundant grace and blessings. Weekly congregation attendance grew from an average of 82 to 100 in 2024. This year, we successfully ran the Chinese Alpha program twice—first from February to May and then from September to November. The response was overwhelming, with 11 participants accepting Christ and being baptised. During the Good Friday and Easter period, we organised a family camp at Camp Wilkin in Anglesea, hosting a total of 100 campers. Remarkably, 10 individuals accepted Christ, and among them, two were baptised. We held two combined English and Chinese baptism services on June 16 and November 17, witnessing the baptism of seven adults in June and six more in November. The heartfelt testimonies shared by the candidates deeply moved many members of the congregation. Other key outreach events included the Christmas Evangelistic Night, co-hosted with “GospelCan” where cancer patients and their families shared stories of God’s love and hope, and the Mooncake Festival held on September 14th.



We are also grateful to have welcomed Rachael Lie to our pastoral team (Edmund Hu & James Tong) as a part-time Pastoral Care Pastor, starting on July 1, 2024. We give thanks to God for the unwavering support of the church leadership team and the dedication of leaders and volunteers who help facilitate the Chinese ministry, worship services, small groups, and other activities. May all glory be to God alone, now and forevermore. Amen!

➔ **100 Attending Weekly**  
up from 82 in 2023

➔ **100 Chinese Family  
Camp Attendees**

➔ **11 Baptisms**

# Generations

## NEWHOPE KIDS

It's been such a joy to watch kids of all ages grow in their faith and understanding of God this year. Our Junior Kids room has really grown, and it's been exciting to see so many new families join us—some coming in off the street, others who aren't necessarily interested in church but want their kids to hear the good news. These are truly exciting times!

Across both our Senior and Junior Kids ministries, it's been amazing to see our leaders grow in their own faith as well. They've been building stronger relationships with the kids they serve while also developing their own leadership skills. So many of our leaders have stepped out of their comfort zones and tried new things, which has been such an encouragement to see. It's so exciting to witness the next generation of leaders stepping up, going deeper with Jesus and growing in their faith.

In our Senior Kids ministry, we've seen children really start to understand who God is. Lots of kids have learned their memory verses, made commitments to Jesus, and received their own Bibles. They've been excited to take on new challenges and even contribute to the program themselves—one of the highlights was when the kids helped lead a Sunday morning program!

Our annual Pyjama Jam was a big hit this year, with lots of kids coming along and bringing friends. We also saw our kids get involved in



the Snack Attack appeal, bringing snacks to help kids at Kerrimuir Primary and Blackburn High. It was so encouraging to see them stepping out to make a difference in their community.

Over the July holidays, we had the chance to open our doors to the community with Preschool Storytimes, Playspace, and lots of fun holiday activities and crafts. It was wonderful to connect with people who had never been to NewHope before—many were curious about the hope we share. Our Winter Party with mainly music and Playspace was another great event, and our holiday activities continue to be well-attended, with word spreading about what we have on offer.

Each term, we have also had the privilege of spending time in the NewHope Preschool, connecting with the kids there, and sharing a devotional with them. It's been such a joy to build relationships and create opportunities for them to grow in their faith.

What an amazing year it's been! We are so excited to see what God has in store for us next.

→ **130 Kids**  
Attending each Sunday

→ **58 Family Camp Attendees**

## PLAYSPACE

Playspace continues to be a blessing to the local community, and a great entry point, working alongside the café as a “middle ground” between the wider community and the church.

2024 saw many new faces and improvements to the ministry space. This year we opened the outdoor area as a new play option for parents and children, and upgraded some older toys that had been in use for 10 years.

We hosted multiple events in the year including our 10 year birthday party, celebrating past and present Playspace staff, which had a turnout of over 100 attendees. We also had our annual Christmas party with a similar large turnout.

We have been able to follow Jesus’ call to ‘welcome the little ones’ through play and our live music program, and through fruitful conversation we have been able to direct curious parents to various other church ministries and services!

We ran a small survey and the feedback and comments were very positive and productive. Parents have commented they like the “different toys, spacious environment, other kids to mingle with, music time (on Tuesday), and friendliness”. Another patron commented they like the “free, unstructured play without anything messy or wet”, and another patron likes that it’s “secure, can use entire room/watch kids, and a coffee shop on hand”.

In 2025 we will continue the course we’re on and plan to introduce more scripture centred songs in our music program, in line with the scripture “let the little children come to me”, that is come to Jesus, the Word of God made flesh. We plan on improving the indoor and outdoor spaces and continue to bless our community.



## 10 Years of Ministry!

**2340 Cafe Orders**  
made for Playspace attendees

**143 Weekly Attendees**

## MAINLY MUSIC

2024 was an amazing year for mainly music. It was such a joy to have around 55 children at mainly music each week during the school term. mainly music serves as a delightful introduction for the younger generation to learn about God through worship and praise, fostering a sense of spirituality from an early age.

This year, we were delighted to welcome a family not connected with a church to mainly music. Through conversations, we learned that the child's mother had previously participated in church activities but, for various reasons, had eventually stepped away.

After one session, we were able to lend the family a children's Bible, to our joy and surprise, they returned a week later, asking if they could hold onto it for another week because her son had fallen in love with it, reading it as his bedtime story every night. This opened the door for us to invite them to our Sunday Kids Church, and now they attend Kids Church regularly.

It has been a true blessing to witness how God works in unexpected and wonderful ways in our mainly music families. We pray that mainly music will continue to be a place of joy, connection, and spiritual growth for many families. May we keep planting seeds of faith and love, trusting that God will water them in His perfect timing!

## OLDER ADULTS & PASTORAL CARE

We continue to rejoice at the ministry happening amongst the older members of our congregation. There is an active group that gathers for worship services, Prime Timers, and provides support for one another in what can be a challenging season of life.

Rosemary Castles remains dedicated to overseeing pastoral care for those over 80, leading a team that supports individuals who wish to have a pastoral carer. This group of volunteers regularly visits aged care facilities, meets with people in their homes, and makes phone calls to check in. We are especially thankful for these pastoral carers. At times, pastors will join pastoral visits to pray for or take communion with those unable to join in services. Meals are often cooked by young adult small groups and frozen, giving Rosemary a resource for those who may not be able to regularly cook for themselves. Our 'golden oldies' are a precious part of NewHope, and to care for them is a privilege.

John and Jenny Fearn-Wannan led another fantastic year of Prime Timers, with around 50 people attending the monthly gatherings at NewHope. Speakers such as Chris Meyers shared captivating stories from both the past and present. We were privileged to hear Agnes Tepe share her experiences of growing up as a Jew In Nazi Germany; and it was good to hear from Danny and Beth Hunt who shared about their ministry in Central Australia. Andrew Naylor, Don Batten and Lance Sterling were also guests. Senior Pastor, Allan Demond, gave a fascinating talk about icons in Eastern Orthodox art. It was another inspiring year, filled with great connections, delicious food and thoughtful, fun speakers.

## SHIFT YOUTH

2024 was the beginning of a new season for SHIFT Youth with Hannah Freeman stepping into the role of Youth Pastor and Billy Dyett stepping into the Youth Ministry Worker role. It was an enormous blessing to be able to embrace a ministry in such great shape. A long legacy of health in the youth ministry and an incredible volunteer team of 52 leaders, combined to ensure we were able to hit the ground running.

In term 1 we started with the basics, receiving and responding to the gospel. The middle of the year was spent exploring spiritual formation, based on the "Practicing the Way" resources. We finished term 3 with a mini-series on the bible, inviting the whole ministry to finish the year reading through the gospel of Luke together.

An expanding desire to seek God in prayer has been evident, particularly among our youth leaders this year. It has been a great encouragement to have many come along to our pre-youth prayer meeting, and to see life and passion overflow out of that meeting into everything else we do.

Our transition programs, having been re-imagined in 2023, continued to be a strength of the ministry this year. Our grade 6s graduated from Kids Church mid-year and entered into the Grade 6 transition program, beginning with Youth Alpha and ending the year with a serving rotation on Sunday

mornings. It has been a joy to see youth grow in confidence in their faith and their place in the wider NewHope family, as well as grow their relationships with their new leaders through this program.

EXPAND, a sixth month leadership and discipleship formation program for our high-school graduates, was a great pathway into youth leadership and other serving opportunities. With an array of relevant topics, guest speakers and retreats, EXPAND was an excellent way to engage and equip this cohort.

→ **58 New Regulars**

→ **281 Regulars**

→ **52 Leaders**

Shift Youth emphasised involvement with church life and community beyond our Friday night program. Our Youth Takeover Service was a great opportunity to invite our senior youth to invest in the evening service, as well as providing another reason for all our youth to invite friends along.

State Youth Games continues to be an incredible place for youth, young adults and parents to build community and have fun. This, as always, was one of our highlights for the year alongside Youth Camp, Year 7 Camp, Youth Band Workshops and youth baptisms.

## NEWHOPE YOUNG ADULTS

In 2024, our Young Adults community embraced new leadership as Adam Southwood and Phil Gaudion stepped in to guide the team forward, building on Lance's leadership over the previous years.

The support of the Young Adults planning team, made up of 8 young adults from various age groups, continued to be fruitful in shaping events for the Young Adults community throughout the year.

With the heart of forming resilient disciples for the glory of God, we continued to invest in the young adults cohort through our 9 small groups and NHYA Combined Nights. These Nights offered an intentional mix of community connection and pressing deeper into faith. With guest speakers like Trudi Sayers from 24-7 Prayer Australia and Julieanne Laird from City to City Australia. We were also blessed by an enthusiastic panel of NewHope members, including Sally Agostino, Peter Savvas, and Cath DeWitt, as they shared about their discipleship journey. These nights have been such a great opportunity for our Young Adults to build deeper relationships with one another and gain insights into living out their faith.

So many of our young adults enjoyed a chance to build community and grow connections over a meal with each other, there is something powerful about gathering together for a meal. The Young Adults (and other 5pm service attendees) are blessed once a month by an incredible team who

prepare a meal after the service at 'Lounge'. This amazing team sets up a welcoming and inviting space for people to gather after the service, all supported by an amazing cooking team, to provide some amazing food! Throughout the year we also invested in our Older Young Adults, providing opportunities for our young professionals or young parents to connect at a number of events.

The highlight of the year was the Young Adults Retreat at Portsea Camp. Guest speaker Andy Mitchell from Whitley College challenged us with deep theology and encouraged everyone to pursue lasting covenant relationships with God and one another. We enjoyed powerful times of worship, beach walks, electives, and delicious food, all thanks to the incredible catering by Tam Gaudion.



Overall, 2024 was an incredible year of growth and connection for our Young Adults community. We're excited for what 2025 holds as we continue to see God build faith and community among us.

→ 13 YA Events

→ 96 Retreat Attendees

# Leadership

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

2024 started with the Leaders Launch Training Day for all of our ministries. It was so encouraging to have over 200 of our leaders across all of our ministries at NewHope coming together to learn and complete compliance training together.

Developing leaders is deeply embedded into the ministry framework at NewHope. The strength of our generational ministries provides a pathway for developing leaders to simultaneously receive healthy leadership while also growing in leadership themselves as they serve others.

Our heart is that young leaders in particular are nurtured to grow as they serve across the life of the church. Focused leadership development is currently occurring through initiatives such as EXPAND, Youth Band and the Grade 6 serving program.

In 2024 the EXPAND program equipped 5 emerging leaders through a 6-month leadership and discipleship formation program, including a retreat, and input from our pastoral team and other leaders across our Baptist Union.

As a part of their transition into Youth ministry, we provide an opportunity for Grade 6s to try their hand at serving on different Sunday ministry teams. It was a joy to see 12 grade 6s serving in Term 4. This has led to several of our young people engaging in ongoing serving at NewHope.

NewHope has a history of raising and releasing leaders for the wider Kingdom, which we aspire to keep upholding. In 2024, we partnered with Arrow Leadership to send Sienna Shacklock through the Arrow Rise program and sow into in her leadership.

Beyond dedicated programs, members of our staff team, and other core ministry leaders participated in a range of external training, including the Accessible Prophecy Conference, Empowered Faith Communities training, BUV Pastors Cohorts and other BUV workshops, just to name a few.

We were also privileged to have Tom Bonda, who joined our Media Team as an Intern for the first half of 2024, gaining relevant experience and helping us to fill gaps through long service leave periods.



→ 5 Emerging Leaders Equipped

→ 213 Trained at Leaders Launch

# **Social Enterprises & Organisations**

## COMMUNITY CENTRE EVENTS

2024 has been an exciting and rewarding year for Events at NewHope Community Centre. With the Events Management role now shared by Kent Pittendrigh and Liane Viljoen, we have embraced new opportunities to connect with the community and showcase all that NewHope has to offer.

There have been increased demands all across the board as we continue to balance the logistics of our building, and we have continued to support various ministries, programs and initiatives with great success. The demand for our event spaces and services has remained strong, and we've hosted a wide variety of gatherings that have brought people together in meaningful ways. From graduations to community meetings, and conferences to concerts, we've worked diligently to ensure each occasion is memorable and runs smoothly.

The positive feedback from clients has been a consistent highlight. Many have praised the warm hospitality, attention to detail, and professionalism of our team. The ongoing trust and value placed in NewHope are reflected in repeated bookings and a steady stream of new inquiries.

Key highlights of the year include:

- Welcoming new clients and organisations, expanding the variety of events hosted in our building.
- Effectively balancing internal ministry needs with external bookings.
- Maintaining high standards of safety, security, and exceptional service for every event.

As we reflect on 2024, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve our community through these events. We look forward to continuing to build relationships, welcome new clients, and find new ways to support the diverse needs of the local community through NewHope Community Centre Events.



**We Are Messengers - World Tour**



**Whitehorse Churches Care - Celebration Night**

# NEWHOPE COMMUNITY CARE INC.

2024 was a year of great health in NewHope Community Care. With strong volunteer involvement and healthy financial support, NHCC was able to extend its reach of support to more people in 2024. Programs such as Learn English, the Relief Care desk and Kids Hope all experienced significant growth.

Ongoing development within the café to launch a functioning social enterprise while also developing improved financial viability of the business model were significant projects throughout the year. A restructure of NHCC staff roles in 2024 will enable opportunity for continued capacity growth and contingency management within the ministry in future years.

The work of NHCC is enabled primarily through a team of 116 volunteers who give of their time, skills and passion to support people in need. We celebrate this wider team and also acknowledge the staff and key volunteer leadership who contribute to this wonderful ministry. A more detailed report of NHCC performance in 2024 will be provided in the NHCC Annual Report.

Here's a summary of the areas NHCC has been working in during 2024:

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<b>RELIEF CENTRE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Operates 10am - 2pm Monday to Wednesday.</li><li>• Form relationships, establish trust, triage needs.</li><li>• No. of Clients in 2024 = ~200 individuals (71 new clients).</li><li>• Client visits = 550 (17% growth on 2023).</li><li>• Grocery cards distributed = \$7,500</li></ul>
<b>FOOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food Pantry.</li><li>• Food Parcels to other Organisations.</li><li>• Monthly Food Swaps (neighbours sharing the abundance of their gardens).</li><li>• Successful Christmas is Giving campaign.</li><li>• Community Food Pantry (outside on Springfield Road).</li></ul>
<b>ASYLUM SEEKER &amp; REFUGEES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for the Persian Congregation:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monthly Food Vouchers</li><li>• Persian Food Pantry staples</li><li>• Emergency needs of people in hardship</li><li>• 1 Day a week for Pastor Sam Farbod</li></ul></li><li>• Began preliminary work to explore the possibility of engaging in refugee sponsorship in 2025.</li></ul>

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**ENGLISH CLASSES**

- Learn English at NewHope had strong participation throughout 2024
- Year end average attendance of 60 people
- English and the Bible had strong attendance

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**COMMUNITY MENTORING**

- COACH Program continued with a number of people expressing interest in being trained .
- Collaborative partnership with Crossway LifeCare in 2024 to recruit and train potential COACH mentors.
- KidsHope at Kerrimuir Primary School grew to 15 volunteers in 2024 (8 volunteers in 2023).

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**HOMELESSNESS**

- Jubilee Housing - 41 units dedicated to low income housing.
- David Taylor and Lance Blythe represent NewHope on the Committee of Management for Jubilee.
- Direct support through the relief desk and staff team to individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Regular triaging and assistance offered for those vulnerable to/ experiencing homelessness.

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**MENTAL HEALTH**

- Flourish Course at NewHope.
- Mental Health Support offered through Total Wellbeing.
- Griefshare had 12 registrations with 8 participants completing the program.

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**WHITEHORSE CHURCHES CARE**

- Allan Demond chairs the board of WCC.
- NHCC is engaged with the Whitehorse Community Meals Network through a fortnightly meal in Mitcham.
- NewHope maintains volunteer involvement in the Forest Hill Chase Community Space.
- Regular collaborative work between churches within Whitehorse.
- The NHCC team participates in the Whitehorse Food Relief Network along with other churches, Whitehorse City Council, Foodbank Victoria and other local providers.
- We are involved in preparing to launch a Community Meal for the residents of the social housing around Luckie Street, Nunawading.
- NewHope volunteers support the WCC Christmas meal hosted in 2024.

## MIDDLE GROUND CAFÉ

The Middle Ground Café continued to provide hospitality and service to our local community throughout 2024 with over 16,300 coffees and over 9,000 meals being served. On top of this the Café catered for 124 events during 2024. The work of the Café is enabled through our wonderful volunteer team who provide faithful hospitality throughout the week to all of our customers. We celebrate every volunteer who contributed to this ministry of NewHope in 2024.



The customer demographics of the Café are primarily retirees, young parents with children and those who attend events at NewHope. In 2024 a significant amount of effort was put into increasing the Café's ability to cater to these key demographics. QR code ordering was implemented to better cater to the parental needs in Playspace, a successful July school holiday program was pioneered in partnership with families ministries and ongoing revision of the menu and pricing occurred. This work, along with a number of other initiatives, created many opportunities for increased engagement with our key customer demographics. Our 2024 staff team, Eva Gillam, Tam Gaudion, Connie Rizzuto and Billy Dyett were flexible, creative and adaptive as a range of ways to increase patronage within the Café was explored.

During the final quarter of 2024 a review of the financial sustainability of the Café was conducted. In consultation with the Church Council a decision was made to explore more cost effective models of operations for the Café. This work resulted in the role of cook being made redundant. The result was that unfortunately, Tam Gaudion and Connie Rizzuto's roles as cook within the Café came to an end in December 2024. We are grateful to both of them for their dedication and hard work within the Café over a number of years.

The groundwork for a new Café model began in the final weeks of 2024 and we are eager to see the impact of the revised operations of the Café in 2025.



## NEWHOPE MEDICAL LTD.

NewHope Medical Ltd. handed ownership of the practice to Total Wellbeing this year. All our doctors and most of the staff members became part of the team. We celebrate this outcome and our continuing partnership as they continue to be our Employee Assistance Program providers.

## NEWHOPE BAPTIST PRESCHOOL INC.

NewHope Baptist Preschool had a great year in 2024, with many achievements, and a strong sense of community. A highlight was the successful implementation of our Bush Kinder Program, where children explored nature-based learning, fostering curiosity, resilience, and a wonderful appreciation for nature and God’s creation. We also made use of NewHope Baptist Church’s facilities, incorporating event rooms, the communal kitchen, and the Café into our activities to create engaging learning experiences.

This year, we were proud to receive an “Exceeding” rating in all seven National Quality Standards during our Assessment and Rating. This rating reflects the dedication of our amazing educational team and the quality of our programs and practices in providing high-quality early childhood education to 88 enrolled children in our preschool.

We hosted 11 university students completing placements with us this year. Mentoring students, fosters meaningful connections with the broader community, and builds professional partnerships, which supports the development of future Teachers. We also received a \$2,000 IT grant through the Building Blocks Improvement Grant to improve our technology resources.

We went on many exciting excursions, with outings such as local nature walks and play at Cootamundra walk, Blackburn Lake and a visit to the fire station, as well as many incursions.

We are grateful for the collaborative work of our educational team, committee, families, and the NewHope Baptist Church community. Together, we continue to reflect Christ’s love in our preschool.



# Sacred Memories

## Sienna Shacklock

My involvement at NewHope has been deeply rooted in the youth program, where I was a regular attendee throughout high school and, more recently, serving as a leader. I remember year 7 camp as a youth in 2017, and experiencing the same weekend from a different perspective as a leader was a wonderful encouragement!

The faithfulness and generosity of the people who host this camp annually, providing food, activities and a beautiful location for us to gather; the faithfulness and dedication of my youth leaders, who invested deeply in my life and nurtured my faith, enabling me to now serve in that same capacity for the next generation of youth; the faithfulness of the parents, who encourage their children to pursue Jesus, and entrust them into our care to love, support and journey with them through such formative years. This weekend hosted a deeply impactful moment in my journey at NewHope. A moment where a collection of Sacred Memories arose.



*The first Youth Camp c1960's*

## Peter & Viv Siede

God often speaks during significant moments, like weddings and funerals. We remember a funeral where Allan spoke on Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool. God has two titles for people when they die; 'My child' or 'You fool'. "Friends, pause for a moment and learn that life is short and you need to spend it well." This young man made the right choice and was safe in the arms of Jesus.

"How are you going to run your marriage?" was asked at a wedding for a young couple, dear to us. They ran businesses and were sporty, but running your marriage with a focus on bottom-line or the winning of a trophy wasn't recommended. The couple were encouraged (as we are) to run their lives how Jesus runs the church. "Every morning think of your partner as being Jesus and live your life with that thought." Now that's some thought!

How blessed have we been over the past 30 years to hear God's Word so powerfully delivered.

## Laura Harris & Lilian Chan

NewHope KYB (Know Your Bible) is a women's bible study group that started about 18 years ago. After discernment and lots of prayer, the Lord blessed us with a group of 14 women interested in studying God's word. And so, in 2008 NewHope KYB was born. By the end of 2024 the group has grown to 56 ladies of all ages.

Throughout the years, God continues to change & grow the hearts of everyone involved in this group. We delve deeper into God's word each week, and in addition, we also do life together; supporting one another through the ups & downs of daily life, and loving others deeply and unconditionally. We always reflect on how God continues to bless us abundantly more than we could ask or imagine. Therefore, we have been able to live out God's blessing in our lives by being outward focused, offering pastoral care to many.



*KYB group 2024*

## Jan Sprake

Some 19 years ago, our family was gathered after lunch when suddenly two-year-old Tali climbed up on a chair, leaned on a window screen, and disappeared! He fell 6 feet, but we found not one bruise or scratch. A few days before, I'd read in Matthew how Jesus said of children that their angels are always beholding the face of the Father. We shared the event with our small group, and later, Les Cole gave us a guardian angel figurine, a reminder that sits on our mantelpiece and has been the object of retelling the story many times. Praise God for small group friendships which span decades, and prayerful support which gives such encouragement.

## Rowan & Sue Cooper

In 2001 we created a unique Saturday night church experience. Greeted by the aroma of fresh brewed coffee and cakes, the 20 minute coffee time in the middle of the service was central to making the "non-churched" feel welcome. We explored new ways of worshipping, creating community and sharing our faith, including an open invitation for post-church pizza, baptisms at the beach and the best homemade communion bread. Saturday nights ran until 2008 and many who tried church for the first time have become committed Christians.

# **Ministry Support**

## PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

2024 was a busy and productive year, normal essential maintenance was carried out to support NewHope ministries and external clients, and continued efforts were made to keep our buildings safe and compliant.

During 2024 we ran an amazing working bee, which was well attended by the NewHope congregation. The working bee greatly assisted us in getting a grip on the gardens which had required an overwhelming amount of resources to maintain previously.

Also during 2024, we changed our cleaners. Our prayers were answered and two amazing staff, Marilyn and Kobra, joined the team mid year and have been doing an amazing job keeping our wonderful facility in pristine condition!

2024 was a very busy year, with many jobs completed with assistance from a team of wonderful volunteers who play a key role in assisting with the upkeep of our amazing facility, inside and out!

## PROPERTY CLEANING

Our NewHope family is truly blessed with such a magnificent property. This year in July the cleanliness of our spaces was restored, positively benefiting all those who inhabit it from staff, to church body and visitors alike.

The new strategy to employ in house cleaning staff during business hours in lieu of external contractors after hours has been very positive and continues to see big improvements. In particular, huge efforts were initiated to raise the substandard levels of cleanliness and hygiene in all bathrooms and preschool areas. This achievement is now being maintained to the enjoyment of all users.

With the assistance of volunteers, our Working Bee day allowed for much needed attention to some finer details. The Baptistry, kitchen cupboards and fridges, Café mats, seats and even bins were all recipients of improved hygiene.

Notably, we were indebted to two volunteers who transformed the smudged fingerprint windows and entrance doors on the ground level to transparently sparkling! Moreover, valuable connections have been made and treasured relationships established with our brothers and sisters in Christ as stories were exchanged on the day during our activities.

Finally, heartfelt thanks is extended to all for their many words of gratitude, appreciation and encouragement during the challenging early stages. Praise and Glory to our Lord!



## COMMUNICATIONS

In 2024, our Communications Ministry continued to resource and support Kingdom work at NewHope.

We rolled out clear and consistent messaging across our channels, including 25 fortnightly News emails, 40 NewHope Today videos and almost 100 social posts which reached over 29.6 thousand people. We supported special campaigns such as the NewHope Lent Group and the call to Prayer & Fasting devotional, and also had the privilege of capturing and sharing many stories of God's faithfulness.

The Comms team was also able to support our Church Council in communicating information about our succession journey. We created a webpage as a central hub for updates, built processes for collecting feedback, questions and input, and helped in the design and development of information packs for external advertising of the role. This was a special opportunity to support a significant moment in the life of our church.

Behind the scenes, we continued to develop systems with the launch of the Giving platform in Planning Center. Our team also had the privilege of partnering with others in joint mission to the community. An example of this was Kent Pittendrigh's work with Whitehorse Churches Care, lending his skills to develop their website and strengthen processes.

## IT SERVICES

2024 was another routine year with regards to Information Technology. IT services at NewHope were in part made simpler as we finalised involvement with both Blackburn NewHope Football Club and NewHope Medical in 2023 which freed up some resources for the continuing operations of the church, preschool and community centre facility.

Negligible changes were made to infrastructure with the existing equipment capable of meeting the demands of our services, teams and events. We were able to use this time to optimise and resolve various technical issues including a key effort to

stabilise the Café point of sale and kitchen display system.

Following work done in 2023 to reduce abandoned and orphaned online accounts, we reviewed access to administrative permissions across many online services used at NewHope, ensuring that we are able to maintain safe and secure systems. Alongside this we continued roll-out of backup services and worked on phasing out some of the depreciated computers still in use.

It has been a blessing through 2024 to have some time available to spend on refining key parts of our infrastructure and keeping up with the simple yet all-too-important housekeeping tasks.

## FINANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT

The Finance Team at NewHope consists of Sanette Wood and Jono Hill. We are blessed by three wonderful volunteers and Craig Neilson, our Finance Director, who has been actively involved in the NewHope finances. Throughout 2024, the team continued to service all financial and payroll needs for NewHope Baptist Church, NewHope Baptist Preschool, NewHope Community Care and Middle Ground Café. The Blackburn Football Club and the NewHope Medical Centre have successfully transitioned, and finance team support has now concluded. We remain committed to ensuring financial sustainability and transparency across all ministries and entities.

NewHope Baptist Church experienced steady financial support, with giving reaching 95% of the target, showing a slight improvement from the previous year. Global Mission Giving remained strong at 118% of the target, demonstrating NewHope's generosity towards mission work. Events faced challenges due to the loss of two major clients, resulting in a 40% decrease in income. Revised strategies are being implemented to restore growth.

NewHope Community Care had a successful year, particularly with the June appeal reaching its target of \$140,000. Middle Ground Café navigated ongoing operational challenges. A new model is being trialled with a front of house approach and selling ready made food only. We are working towards a break even point.

NewHope Baptist Preschool maintained strong enrolments throughout 2024, ensuring financial stability. The free kindergarten funding model was successfully managed.

Contributions to the Tax Deductible Fund remained strong, achieving 106% of the budget. The Medical Centre, having secured its Health Promotion Charity status, continued to benefit from tax deductible fund transfers, allowing for further debt reduction.

Looking ahead, the Finance Team remains focused on improving financial processes, enhancing reporting capabilities, and supporting the broader NewHope community in financial stewardship and strategic planning.

The Risk Team, consisting of Adam Southwood and Sanette Wood, continued monthly high-level risk reviews, assessing potential threats and vulnerabilities while providing regular updates to the executive team. The team also played a key role in writing and updating policies and has liaised with Baptist Insurance Services on several issues. A quarterly walk-through of the NewHope premises has been implemented to ensure compliance with safety regulations.

## OFFICE MANAGEMENT & RECEPTION

This year has been all about teamwork, growth, and keeping things running smoothly at NewHope. Our Office Management team has worked hard to make sure the reception area and everything behind the scenes runs like clockwork, creating a welcoming space for everyone who walks through our doors.

Here's a glimpse of what we've been up to:

- **Keeping Things Organised:** From ordering stationery and answering website requests to keeping archives up to date, we've focused on keeping everything running efficiently.
- **Looking After the Space:** Whether it's setting up rooms, keeping the plants happy, or making sure everything stays clean, we've kept NewHope looking its best.
- **Welcoming Our Community:** We've enjoyed giving tours to potential clients, managing bookings for healing prayer, and making sure everyone feels valued and cared for.
- **Behind-the-Scenes Work:** From collecting mail to preparing for council meetings and running reports, we've stayed on top of all the little details that make a big difference.
- **Supporting Everyone Who Walks In:** Whether it's visitors, staff, or volunteers, our focus has always been on helping people feel at home here at NewHope.

A big highlight this year has been the positive feedback from our community. It's clear that the effort and care we put into what we do make a real impact, and we're so grateful for that.

We also want to give a huge shoutout to our incredible volunteers. They've been a massive support and have gone above and beyond to make sure NewHope stays a welcoming and vibrant place.

We're excited for what's ahead and are so thankful to be part of a community that's all about care, connection, and making a difference.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

As at 31 December 2023 the **full time staff equivalent** for the entities were:

NewHope Baptist Church	16.10 (2023) > 18.88 (2024)
NewHope Community Care Inc.	4.39 (2023) > 3.16 (2024)
NewHope Medical Ltd.	1.61 (2023) > 0.00 (2024)
NewHope Baptist Preschool Inc.	4.75 (2023) > 5.25 (2024)

NewHope Staff Members **commencing** in 2024:

### **NewHope Baptist Church:**

- James Tong (Chinese Ministry Outreach)
- Kaylee Crous (Kids Ministry Assistant)
- Billy Dyett (Youth Ministry Worker)
- Rachael Lie (Chinese Ministry Pastoral Care)
- Sally Agostino (Associate Pastor)
- Marilyn Sellan (Cleaning Coordinator)
- Kobra Nazari (Cleaning Team)

### **NewHope Baptist Preschool Inc.:**

- Claire Spencer (Educator)
- Dawn Flude (Educator)
- Henal Shah (Casual Educator)
- Yifei Xie (Casual Educator)

NewHope Staff Members **concluding** their roles in 2024:

### **NewHope Baptist Church:**

- Angela Natsis (Events Manager)
- Majid Soltanzadeh (Farsi Ministry Pastor)

### **NewHope Community Care Inc.:**

- Matt Aeschlimann (Cook)
- Miranda Lewtas (COACH)
- Tam Gaudion (Cook)

### **NewHope Baptist Preschool Inc.:**

- Claire Spencer (Educator)
- Tingting Lua (Educator)

### **NewHope Medical Ltd.:**

- Denise Forsyth (Contract)

Staff members who have six or more pastoral supervision sessions per year as part of the accreditation requirements with the Baptist Union of Victoria:

- Allan Demond
- Surette Southwood
- Lance Blythe
- Sally Agostino
- Edmund Hu
- Sam Farbod
- Adam Southwood
- Tim Spencer
- Hannah Freeman
- Phil Gaudion
- James Tong
- Rachael Lie
- Bec Burley

Our annual budget provides for professional development; each staff member has an allocated budget and attends external training based on their position requirements and development pathway. This year, some of the following courses were participated in:

- First Aid
- BUV Nourish - Restoration and Resilience
- Community of Practice
- Manual Handling
- Emergency Management
- Preaching Workshops
- Family Violence
- Empowered Faith Communities
- Advanced Prayer Ministry
- Addressing addictions
- Child Safety
- Accessible Prophecy
- Mental Health Training
- Grants Writing
- Saward Dawson webinars on several topics
- Moores Legal webinars on several topics
- CMA Annual Conference (Advancing Ministry Effectiveness)
- Law of Religious Institutions Annual Conference
- Australian Institute of Company Directors Course (80% sponsored externally)
- Connections through the Micah Women Leaders Network and the Global Leadership Network

Staff announcements:

- Celebrated Alicia Demond and Phil Gaudion being on the staff team for fifteen years
- Sally Agostino was ordained as a Baptist Minister
- Edmund Hu & Adam Southwood completed their Discernment Year with the BUV
- Billy Dyett got engaged to Phoebe Gaudion
- Kaylee Crous got engaged to Ethan Stebbins
- Adam Southwood and his wife Kelsey had a second child, Amelia Vera





**NewHope Baptist Church**

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