



Door of Hope
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The wonder of you

t 6344 8450 f 6344 9450

50 Glen Dhu Street, South Launceston TAS 7249

door-of-hope.org

2019/2020 Annual Report

On the last Sunday of December each year, I present a report to our church family.

It's an overview of the highlights of the year, from ministry activity to operations. It includes an update of the Resource Ministry Board and church finances.

If you missed our December 27 service, I invite you to visit our website and watch the service 'on-demand'; it's well worth your time.

We also wanted to have a written copy of what I shared, including a little more detail for those who are interested.

Celebration of Hope is our annual service celebrating the year that was, taking time to be thankful to God for everything He has done for us, and through us in 2020.

There is no escaping it – this year has been like no other.

2020 will go down in history as a year of exceptional challenge for our world, and whilst Australia has been better placed than most other countries, the challenges have been significant.

I think you'd agree, from the pandemic to the quarantine we have experienced shutdowns, economic turmoil, instability of careers, jobs, and futures. The coronavirus has turned our world upside down in so many ways and has impacted us on so many levels.

Let me start with firstly acknowledging and expressing my sincere thanks to each and every staff member.

I want you to know that each one of our staff is deeply committed to playing their part in the vision and mission of Door of Hope.

We are so blessed to have a ministry team of dedicated staff and volunteers to lead us - working together, pursuing God as we serve our church, community, and city.

And I want to acknowledge and thank our Board of Elders and Resource Ministries Board. They too have served diligently as they have dealt with all the complexities of our church so well.

I am deeply grateful and give thanks to God for each one.

And to you, the Door of Hope family - thank you for your faithfulness and commitment to God, the church, and to others through the disruptions of this year. Your patience and willingness to stay the course alongside us as we navigated uncharted waters is so greatly appreciated and to be applauded. Thank you.

Even with the challenges and difficulties of this year, I believe we're experiencing a defining moment in time for the Church.

I believe this is a time to rise above, and in spite, of the fear. To not only serve the poor, the sick, the fragile, and the vulnerable in times of challenge, but to live a life dedicated to service, firstly to Jesus, and then to others. To not only offer love but to be love. To not only extend kindness and generosity when we feel it's needed but to live a life of kindness and generosity. To invite and include others of all ages, stages, cultures, and backgrounds, and to unite as a community of faith, hope, and love.

I am very confident in the future of the Church - this moment in time is not too big for us. This moment is certainly not too big for God. He continues HIS work in us and through us.

Praise God. He has sustained us with many new and creative opportunities to minister the good news of Jesus to our local community and beyond.

Let's take a look back over the ministry activity of this year, starting with staffing.

We welcomed...

- Anna Musgrove
- Caroline Bastick
- Oliver Mensah
- Sam Cogger
- Melissa Richards
- Wini Heron
- Toby Verhaegh

We also farewelled the following...

- Shanna Powell
- Jessie Hodgman
- Sam Cogger

Now, let me take you back to March where Hope Camp managed to squeeze in just before the major disruptions of the year started. We had a full house (well, actually a full campsite)! A total of 208 happy campers joined in the fun at Ulverstone.

It was then only a matter of weeks before the Coronavirus had truly taken hold, and a worldwide pandemic was broadcast, forcing and fast-tracking changes as we'd never seen before.

In addition to our Sunday services moving fully online, our youth and young adult's programs and many of our Connect Groups moved almost immediately to online gatherings. I am thankful for our leaders, who did whatever was needed to make prompt and easy transitions, and for everyone involved during these tricky times.

Additionally, our Hope Generation team did an exceptional job providing an online program for our children. This program not only served a need right here in our own church family but has been made available to other churches (9 currently I believe) who were not able to provide their own children's program. This provision is now continuing and will be a new part of our ministry here at Door of Hope. What a blessing to have the capacity to share and serve other churches.

Our pastoral team was kept busy with their regular work, plus some new initiatives. Approximately 150 families/individuals were assisted with emergency food supplies, and a number of fresh food deliveries were made to those in our community. Residents of The Manor Aged Care Facility and some in our church community who needed to remain at home were assisted with shopping and home deliveries. All this took place in a COVID safe manner, of course. The connection continued with Levi House and we now have a team building a stronger connection with residents through regular BBQs and craft gatherings. Our Christmas Hamper team worked hard shopping for and connecting with our 100 hamper families - each one being blessed with a large and lovely food hamper just a few weeks ago. Our senior's outreach team delivered afternoon tea gift packs and flowers to approx. 120 individuals and couples within DoH, Levi House, and other community contacts.

Our church-related attendance has substantially increased compared to our pre-COVID weekend attendance. When we include our online audience, our in-person attendance, and our children's & youth engagement, we are now averaging 700 participants each week.

Our evening MadWheels Team has given away a total of 13 cars this year. Let's not forget, this isn't just about cars - it's about making a difference in people's lives, building relationships, and extending invitations. It's worth noting that like many things this year MadWheels had its time of shutdown, so to think they have gifted 13 cars (more than any other year) is quite extraordinary.

The MadWheels Youth Program has had approximately 5-6 students. The team has continued to build relationships with students and families. We have just heard of one past student (who struggled greatly at school and completed the MadWheels program), who is now considering Uni or an apprenticeship. That is an extraordinary success story. Some of these families were also recipients of Christmas hampers, and we are seeing some students and families connecting at church services.

Superheroes camps were also another activity that could not go ahead, but that didn't stop our team - they chose to visit the children who would have attended camps, and personally gifted them with their handmade blankets and some other treats. It was lovely to see many of those families joining us for Hamper Sunday.

Alpha started the year well, and also had to make big changes to their approach. Despite those challenges they still welcomed 56 attendees. In addition, 5 youth and 17 young adults journeyed through the Alpha course.

We also hosted our very first Recovery Course for individuals struggling with addiction of any kind – helping them to find a pathway to healing & wholeness.

We have now reached around 600 stories of hope and transformation, which means we're only 400 away from our 2020 Vision target of 1000. We have all of 2021 to gather and share those remaining stories – maybe yours will be amongst them.

We have witnessed great blessings in the financial aspects of church life this year. Even though coronavirus caused the shutdown of much of our business activity, as well as church services and activities, our overall financial position has remained stable thanks to a number of factors. Door of Hope qualified for Jobkeeper, which supported the payment of many staff wages, especially where there had been dramatic and instant reductions in Resource Ministry Business income.

This also enabled us to be very generous in support of our tenants by substantially reducing their rent, which ensured that as, together, we emerged from the months of shutdown, that the businesses were able to get up and running again quite quickly. I'm thrilled to say, that our building is as active and busy as ever and is thriving. We also enjoyed substantially lower expenses, such as electricity and gas which is another financial blessing. With all that said and done, I'm thrilled to say our church finances are currently tracking above budget. Praise be to our God.

Door of Hope's expenditure can be broken up into the following areas:

- Insurance – 2.3%
- Site-wide maintenance – 7.1%
- Capital expenses – 9.1%
- Staffing costs – 51%
- Interest and loan repayments – 4.2%
- Ministry and other expenses – 26.3%

Moving on to some practical highlights....

Our roof replacement project - the biggest project we have ever undertaken, is now OVER 90% complete. This means we have replaced 19,000m² so far!.

One of the blessings of COVID restrictions was that it actually simplified and accelerated our progress. Under Phenton Gardam's leadership and Peter Cripps project management - plus the help of many additional contractors.

We have now removed 460 tonnes of asbestos cement roofing from our building site. Just a little trivia - that's equivalent to the weight of 460 average cars *or 3 blue whales!!!*

We can truly see the light at the end of the roofing project tunnel.

Documentation has now been completed for the final acquisition of the land from The Crown to establish further car parking. Civil construction work is now progressing.

All planning has now finished, designs are finalised, and contractors have been appointed for our much anticipated Early Learning Centre and work will begin in January 2021. We expect completion around mid-year. A very exciting and unique playscape is planned as part of this development, and we can't wait to see its completion. The landing page of the website is now live – and registrations of interest can be made at southlauncestonearlylearning.com.au

We experienced several obstacles through the year with the council approval processes but are happy to be able to report that work on our new Multi-Purpose Facility is now underway and completion for this project is expected around March 2021.

Moving on to our Door of Hope businesses. Each was affected differently, yet we witnessed God's provision and blessing throughout the year.

Outside School Hours Care remained operational throughout the year, whilst also managing the necessary interruptions to accommodate the roof project. Their numbers fluctuated due to parents not working, or working from home but they maintained their high standard of care and are now experiencing their highest overall demand since they began operating.

Launceston Conference Centre was gearing up for its biggest year yet, with a 40% growth in bookings, when it had to close for over 6 months. 200 paid events had to be canceled, which resulted in a significant loss in revenue. Thankfully, we were able to retain all staff, redeploying them to other roles.

In the past couple of months, business has bounced back. We have all found a new appreciation for online communication opportunities, and now have additional emphasis on teleconferencing facilities which will drive business growth even further in 2021.

Another of our businesses that continued full operation during the COVID shutdown was Door of Hope Central Storage. The storage team does wonderful work, and we are so thankful for each one of them. The occupancy rate for storage units is very high, and the new development of storage units is planned for early 2021.

What a year it's been.

What a church to call home.

What a God we have!

As this year comes to a close I want to finish by asking "*what is the posture of our church moving forward into a new year?*" And maybe you would consider what the posture of your heart is, moving into a brand new year.

Here's what I believe

;

The posture of our church and the posture of each of us must be one of gratitude.

GRATITUDE!

This means we must have an understanding and acknowledgment that everything we have is a gift from God. These gifts are definitely more than we ever deserve.

To whom much is given, much is expected.

James 1:17 states it beautifully - *every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

A posture of gratitude creates a firm foundation of giving thanks for all that we have and for who we are.

The early church had this exact mindset; that everything they had came from God. That was part of their culture. It was a significant part of who they were. It was the posture of their heart.

It went beyond just the giving of finances.

It was about love.

Not only offering love, but being love. Love creates generosity and it creates sacrifice.

I want us to step into 2021 with boldness, direction, and determination.

Let's not stumble our way out of this year just gasping for air and thanking God we *survived* it.

Rather, let's see 2020 as a platform, a launching pad, where we bound into 2021 the strongest we have ever been.

I want us, as a church, to be more intentional in reaching others, to have a renewed hunger to fulfill our purpose, and a greater capacity for wider reach through mission work.

I want us, as a church, to take this moment and say "*God, we are ready to step up*", and make that decision and commitment to give of our life wildly and generously, with the belief that the future is waiting for those with the courage to create it, and that the church is God's instrument to bring faith, hope, love, freedom, and life to this fragile and uncertain world in which we live.

I want us each to make a new and defined commitment to move forward into the future with strength, boldness, and humility.

Why?

Because we are the church!!

And when we do this together, we become stronger and our reach greater.

There's an old proverb that expresses this so well....

"if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together".

I want you to know there is nothing 2020 has thrown at us that can hold us back, or hold us down.

This is our moment to rise up and show our city and this world in which we live, that the church, through Jesus, is the hope of the world.

For the glory of His great name.

Steve Fitzallen
Senior Minister