

Glen Waverley Uniting Church

REPORT TO CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON 30 AUGUST 2015

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY FINDINGS MAY 2015

Previous Congregational Meeting - Tuesday 10 March, 2015

The last congregation meeting minutes record:

“It was felt that different styles of worship could be combined into a single service. The cost of multiple services in terms of the ministry team, money counters etc. should also be taken into consideration. Faye asked that church council conduct a thorough survey to determine the sentiments of the congregation in regards to this matter.”

Worship Services - Survey Approach

Over time Church Council has often discussed the number, style and timing of worship services. It was requested at the congregational meeting that Council again canvas the congregation on the question of reducing the number of services. A survey was developed as a means of determining the sentiments of the congregation in regard to this matter.

In the survey questions to evaluate the features of the worship services were asked and a 7 point scale (below) was used to measure responses. General comments were also sought.

- +3 Essential. I will not come to a service that omits this.
- +2 Highly positive. Omitting this will discourage my participation.
- +1 Positive. I would prefer that this be included.
- 0 Having or omitting this feature will not affect my participation.
- 1 Negative. I would prefer that this be omitted.
- 2 Highly negative. Including this will discourage my participation.
- 3 Deal Breaker. I will not come to a service that includes this.

Surveys were completed by 157 members of the congregation over a number of weeks. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey results has been completed and the results have been considered by Church Council and the Ministry Team. The report below contains:

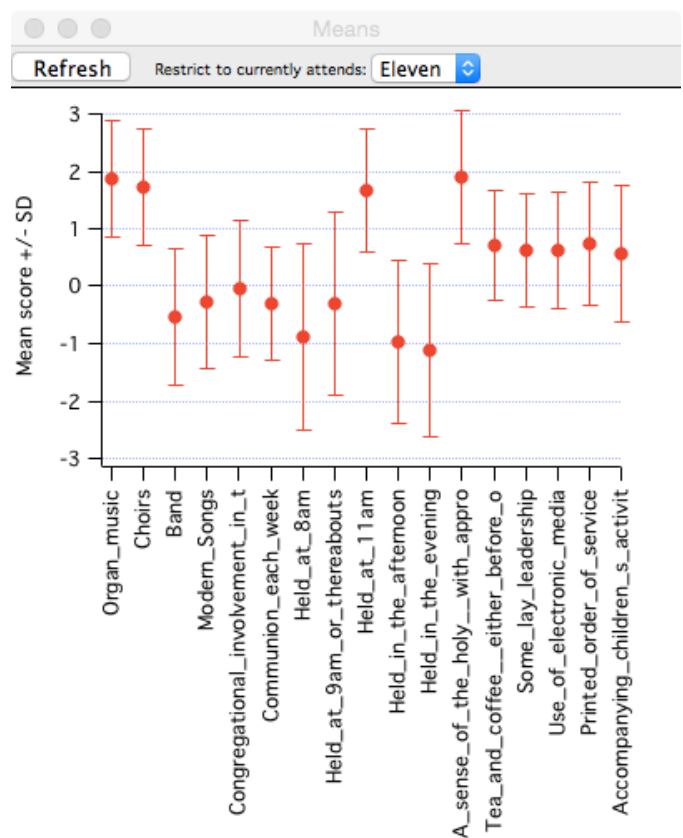
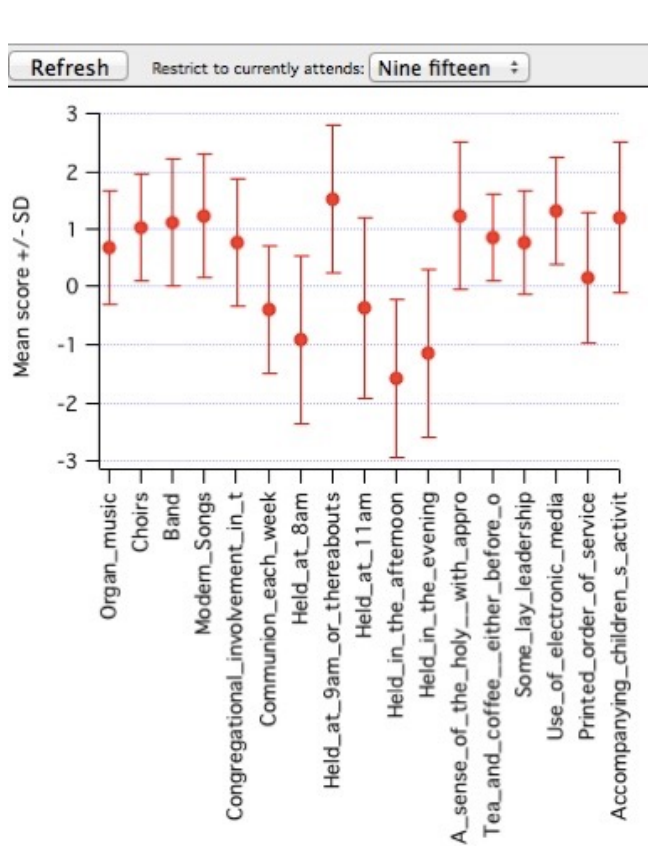
1. Quantitative Summary
2. Qualitative Summary
3. Church Council Response
4. Ministry Team Response

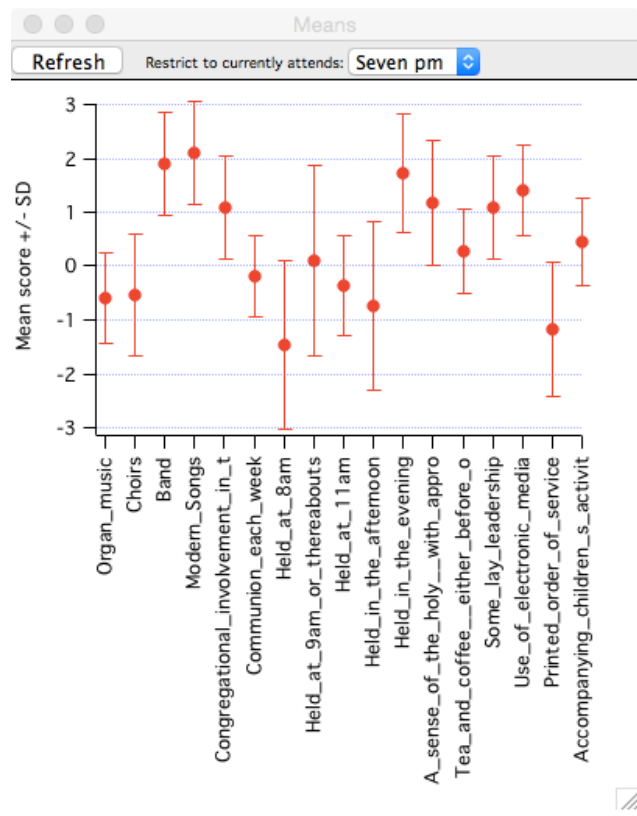
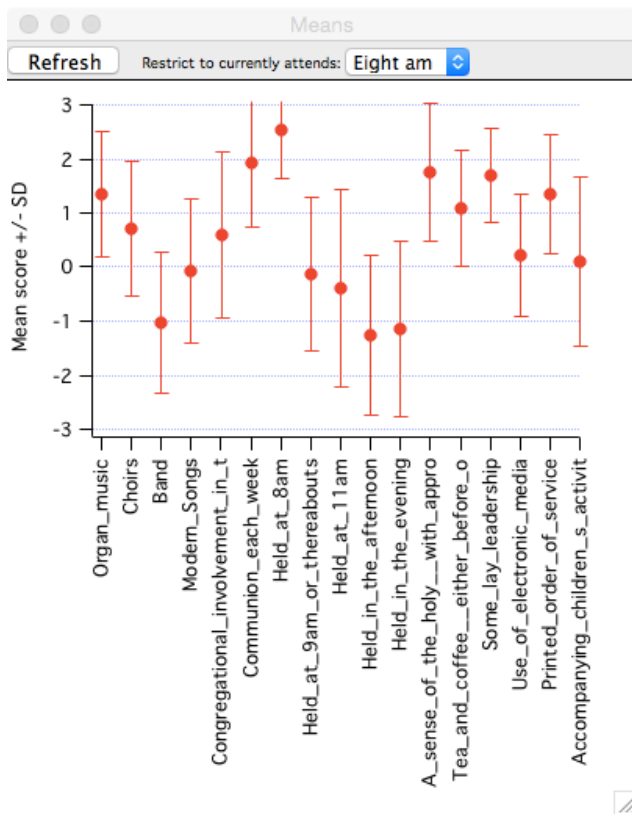
Summary of Quantitative Results (David Morgan)

The Worship Services Survey asked members to nominate the service they regularly attend and to answer 17 questions about their worship preferences using the 7 point scale above. A graph is provided below showing the results for each worship service. On the graph the red dots indicate the average response for each question. The vertical bars indicate the range within which approximately two thirds of all responses fell for each question. The smaller the range the more consistent the response to the particular question were.

The full questionnaire and a more detailed analysis is available on the Wiki under ServicesSurvey2015.

These two panels from the wiki page are the best at showing the differences between 9.15am and 11am.





These graphs show the responses from 8am and 7pm respectively. Other graphs are available at <http://wiki.gwuc.org.au/ServicesSurvey2015> or by email request to david@gwuc.org.au. As always, the office can print a wiki page for you on request.

Comments to note ...

1. The benefits are obvious, and did not need to be explored or reported.
2. Question is whether we are too diverse in our preferred times and styles. This is what the survey addressed. (The question of when does preference become intolerance is beyond this survey.)
3. The survey showed that a number of issues, especially times and music, had significant preferences for and against, even between 9:15 and 11.
4. The good news is that people at all services are very pleased with their service. That is, the unique features of each service are strongly supported by those who attend.

The full analysis, including Team and Council comments, are now at:- <http://wiki.gwuc.org.au/gwuc/ServicesSurvey2015>, linked from the home page.

Summary of Qualitative Responses (Julie Hall)

Introduction

This report provides a brief summary of the findings of a thematic analysis of the qualitative responses to the congregational survey conducted during April /May 2015 regarding church worship.

Of the survey respondents, 152 congregants opted to provide qualitative comments in their survey responses. Respondents indicated which worship service/gathering they attended. The findings below are therefore grouped in terms of the service/gathering attended so as to enable representation of the views of differing timeslot attendees. Thirty-seven respondents indicated that they attended one or more additional Sunday worship gatherings. The substance of the comments of these respondents is incorporated in the summary.

8am Contemplative Service - 28 respondents plus 8 multi-attendance* respondents

(*Summary also incorporates responses from an additional 8 respondents who indicated that they also attend other GWUC Sunday worship gatherings)

Sense of community

- A large majority of respondents valued the 'close', 'caring' and 'personal' relationships enabled by the relatively small, though culturally diverse, 8.00am service community.

Contemplative worship style

- A majority identified the 'contemplative' / 'meditative' / 'reflective' service style as being a very important factor influencing their attendance.

Contemporary theology/liturgy/hymns

- Many valued the 'contemporary' or 'progressive' theological perspective of the service as expressed in the 'liturgy', 'language', 'practice', preaching and 'hymns'.

Preaching/worship leadership/lay participation

- Many appreciated the 'excellent', 'well-researched', 'meaningful' worship leadership, including lay leadership of worship.
- Also valued were the 'reverence' and 'orderly flow', and 'challenging sermon'.

Weekly communion

- A majority also valued the weekly communion.

Timeslot

- Many favoured the early timeslot both because it enabled time for coffee fellowship as well as for other activities across the day.

Viewpoints regarding worship options at Glen Waverley

- Several felt 9.15am and 11.00am could be combined into a 10.00am service, in consideration of church resources.
- Another considered it 'works well' to have three morning service options; another expressed that it was good to have different options so there is something that is suitable for everyone.
- An appreciation of occasional combined services was also expressed; also a suggestion of combined service every 4-6 weeks.
- A suggestion that 8.00am service change to 8.30am start time.

9.15am Interactive Service - 32 respondents plus 17 multi-attendance* respondents

(*Summary also incorporates responses from an additional 17 respondents who indicated that they also attend other GWUC Sunday worship gatherings)

Interactive/informal worship style

- A majority valued the 'interactive', 'informal', 'relaxed atmosphere' participatory worship style of 9.15am service.

Children/family

- Many valued the 9.15am service participation of children (children's segment), the provision of KAT and DOG program and the family friendly atmosphere of the service involving a range of age groups.
- Another considered the children's message too long.

Band/music

- A majority enjoyed the band and contemporary music.
- A suggestion to combine band and organ in one service.
- Respondent uncomfortable with lyrics of some of the songs sung at 9.15am; another noted lack of inclusion of a traditional song/hymn and suggested having one every week or second week.

Timeslot

- A majority favoured the 9.15am timeslot for family and other convenience reasons.

Viewpoints regarding worship options at Glen Waverley

- Some expressed view that it is essential to continue offering various time and style options to cater to diverse needs of congregation.
- A number expressed desire for combined service – prefer to have 'larger' congregation at worship and to 'catch up' with (more) people.
- Some suggested combining 9.15am and 11.00am into a 10.00am service; 10.00am viewed as a convenient time 'to get there'.
- Suggestion of providing one morning service followed by option of breaking into small groups.
- Suggestion of combined service on 5th Sunday of the month.
- A recommendation that the combined service be kept to one hour duration.
- View expressed that it is important to maintain coffee time between services.
- A suggestion to give consideration to mid week service.
- A request for more frequent communion; another suggestion of communion twice a month.
- Suggestion to expand morning children's program and disband 4.30pm program.
- A view that children's ministry should be in all worship.

11am Traditional Worship Service: 45 respondents plus 12 multi-attendance* respondents

(*Summary also incorporates responses from an additional 12 respondents who indicated that they also attend other GWUC Sunday worship gatherings)

Traditional style

- A majority valued the traditional style of worship; the orderly, unbroken flow.
- A comment objected to 'Shalom' during service because it was felt to be disruptive to the flow of worship.

Preaching

- Some expressed appreciation of the preaching.

Hymns/organ/choir

- A majority enjoyed the traditional hymn lyrics and music and organ accompaniment.
- Some expressed appreciation of the choir.

Children

- View expressed that there not be a child play area within the church itself to eliminate distracting noise.
- Suggestion of quieter toys in children's area.

Fellowship

- Some commented on the value of friendships/fellowship/morning coffee.

Timeslot

- Many favoured the 11.00am timeslot.

Note: Seniors' worship also valued.

Viewpoints regarding worship options at Glen Waverley

- Many suggested combining 9.15am and 11.00am into a 10.00am service or 9/9.30am service, valuing a larger congregation.
- Some wanted just one combined service.
- Another wanted a monthly combined service.
- Others supported and were happy with the existing array of worship options.

7pm Community Service - 7 respondents

Worship style

- All respondents valued the 'relaxed', 'modern' style of worship, suitable for youth, young adults.

Teaching/preaching

- Comments made appreciating the teaching/message provided in this service.

Music

- Several noted their appreciation of the band/music.
- Also a comment that at times there are too many hymns.

Inclusion

- Many valued the inclusion of all ages, sense of community.
- A respondent observed 'a lack of warmth from older members of congregation, lack of inclusiveness, of understanding of needs of younger people'.

Timeslot

- Many liked the timeslot; convenient; did not want change of time.

4.30pm Faith Experience (children/families) - 3 respondents

These three respondents made very brief comments indicating that they valued the sense of community, the relaxed shared meal, the welcoming of children, the Bible study/discussion and well known hymns.

Conclusion

As evident from the above noted findings, the congregation hold many and varied views in relation to worship at Glen Waverley.

While it would appear that quite a number of respondents favour the idea of combining the 9.15am and 11.00am services, it is also very apparent that the respective attendees of these services have very differing worship style preferences. This could be difficult to adequately accommodate in a combined service.

There appears to be strong support from its attendee respondents for the 8.00am Contemplative Service, and minimal objection from others to its continuation.

There was only limited response in relation to the 7.00pm Community service and 4.30pm Faith Experience family program, and so it would be difficult to make any decisions in relation to them based on the survey responses.

There would appear to be broad support for occasional combined services, with mixed views about their frequency.

Church Council Response

Given the enthusiasm of the people for each of the current services, Council affirms its support for all the existing service times & styles. Council wishes to celebrate both the diversity of the different services and the unity in the opportunities that we have to come together at various times throughout the year.

Ministry Team Response

At Glen Waverley Uniting Church we are able to offer differing expressions of worship, week by week, while providing various opportunities throughout the year for the whole congregation to worship together. This pattern is strongly endorsed through the worship survey.

As the ministry team we desire that each service is a connected reflection of worship for those who attend, week by week.

The ministry team has been intentional in supporting each other in leading weekly worship, and we are fortunate that all services are well supported by lay leadership, including other team members, worship teams, choirs, organists, bands, readers, prayer leaders, communion stewards and technical people.

We look forward to continuing to serve all members of the congregation through a variety of worship expressions and pastoral care.