

# ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2025

## Rondebosch United Church



Paul Klee, "Introducing the Miracle"

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Dear Fellow Members and Friends!

Our Annual Church Meeting will be held on Sunday 22nd March 2026 at 11h00 in our church hall.

New deacons are to be elected at the meeting. If you would like to nominate someone for either of these offices, please send your nomination via email to the minister ([rpsteiner@icloud.com](mailto:rpsteiner@icloud.com)) and confirm that your nominee is willing stand for election.

### I. AGENDA OF THE AGM MEETING

1. Prayer (including Thanksgiving for the Faithful Departed in 2025)

Almut Fall, Julian Cooke, and Zier Roeleveld.

2. Apologies

3. Minutes of the last Church Meeting

4. Reports

- 4.1 General Reports (to be received)
- 4.2 Report of Church Council Secretary (to be adopted)
- 4.3 Report of Treasurer (to be adopted)

5. Election of Office-bearers:

5.1 Church Treasurer

Roy Kempster is standing to be re-elected.

5.2 Deacons

Resignation: Helen Shaw

Deacons who completed their second term and are stepping down:

Beryl Botman and Aristide Akimana.

Deacons who will continue to serve:

Henry du Plessis (going into third year of second term)

Sue Smith (going into third year of second term)

Heidi Segal (going into second year of second term)

Kume Muloiwa (going into first year of second term)

Fiona McLennan (going into third year of first term)

Glynis Goyns (going into third year of first term)

Cheryl Hewson (going into third year of first term)

Nominations of new deacons: ...

5.3 Property Steward

Jacques Matthee is standing to be re-elected.

5.4 UCCSA Peninsular Regional Council Commissioners

Ros Irlam is standing to be re-elected.

5.6 UPCS Presbytery of the Western Cape Commissioners

Henry Du Plessis is standing to be re-elected.

6. Other business

7. Closure

## **II. MEMBERSHIP REPORT AND BAPTISMS**

Please note that at the end of 2024 our membership stood at 322. Over the last few weeks we have removed those members from our membership role who have not be coming for the last five years or have moved away and did not express the wish to remain members. We have kept those on the membership role, who despite not being able to attend in person keep contributing to our pledge scheme and the ministry of our church. This explains the radical change from 322 to 233 members as of the end of 2025.

### **BAPTISMS (2)**

### **MEMBERS RECEIVED (15)**

By special resolution (15)

By baptism (2)

By confirmation (0)

By transfer (0)

### **MEMBERS LOST (2)**

By moving away (0)

In memoriam (2)

### **ROLL BOOK AT THE END OF 2025**

New members received: 15

Members lost: 2

Total of Church Members: 233

## **III. CHURCH OFFICE HOLDERS**

### **Church Minister (Robert Steiner)**

The ministry of our church continues to rely on the generous support of so many volunteers. The written reports show their ongoing commitment and dedication. Please know how deeply grateful I am to be working together with such beautiful people. Our church is truly built with "living stones" committed to extend the circles of dignity into every part of our city. To gather with you a;; around our table for Holy Communion is always such a joy and privilege.

A special thank you to Vulisango Mtshikwana and Susan Davies for making sure that our sanctuary and hall are such a welcoming and hospitable space on a Sunday morning. I am in particular most grateful for our property steward Jacques Matthee who has spent many many hours co-ordinating and supervising the much needed renovations on our church premise.

And a big thank you also to Heidi Segal for leading us so graciously as Church Council Secretary and for filling the gaps whenever immediate action is needed. I am also deeply grateful for the administrative support which Kate Laburn Peart and Marie Iversen continue to offer so freely and generously as volunteers.

### **Church Council Secretary (Heidi Segal)**

Our Church Council, represented by Kumedzani Muloiwa, Robert Steiner, Heidi Segal, Henry Du Plessis, Sue Smith, Glynis Goyns, Cheryl Hewson, and Fiona McLennan met regularly to oversee various portfolios across our community.

The **Samaritan Partners Fund (Kumedzani Muloiwa)**, met regularly to consider vision and mission of the fund and to allocate donations from contributions received. They hosted a Christmas Market fundraiser in December.

Our **Music Ministry (Kumedzani Muloiwa)** is led from the front, with Kume, Nomonde, and Robert, visible alongside Willem and other regulars, including Russell Davies. We are blessed to have so many talented musicians that help us worship.

The **Holy Circus team (Robert Steiner)** meet regularly to consider how the upcoming sermon content can be made fun and accessible for our younger members. It is a joy to see connections growing between the children as they find each other, with big smiles, before leaving the sanctuary together.

The **Property (Heidi Segal)** and **Hospitality (Sue Smith)** worked closely to prioritise completion of the Garden of Remembrance in 2025. The team created a beautifully peaceful and serene space for us to remember our loved ones.

We kept close account of our **Financial Matters (Henry Du Plessis)**, with oversight by our Treasurer Jono Child (now Roy Kempster) and the Finance Committee.

**Eco-Justice (Glynis Goyns)** along with the Creation Care team ensure that we are being good custodians of our natural resources.

Our **Playfulness Portfolio (Cheryl Hewson)** brought together a wonderful team of creatives and logistics enthusiasts to host a spectacular Soiree, which was loved by all who attended.

Our **Pastoral Team (Fiona McLennan)** ensure that we feel welcomed when arriving on Sunday mornings. They extend this sense of belonging to those who are unable to attend by visiting them regularly.

Our representatives on the **UCCSA (Ros Irlam)** and **UPCSA (Henry du Plessis)** church bodies keep us abreast of upcoming initiatives and ensure that we remain part of a wider National fellowship across South Africa.

We are grateful for the time, love, and energy that all these deacons invest in our community. We are better for it!

### **Child Safeguarding Officer (Michelle Kempster)**

Child safeguarding is a term some of us are familiar with in our work environments, but less so in our church communities. Child safeguarding simply refers to the things we do to keep our children safe while they are interacting with RUC people and activities. It includes child protection, which refers to our response when a child is suspected of being or is identified as being abused. Child safeguarding at its core is about love and care for children and young people as we recognise their vulnerability, simply because of their age, and sometimes with many added risk factors intersecting in their lives.

This year we held two Child Safeguarding Workshops, particularly aimed at our leaders and staff, but open to all, to become informed about the issues around child safeguarding and to be equipped to implement our new child safeguarding policy. 38 people attended our first workshop held in January and facilitated by social workers from Arise, an NPO focusing on strengthening families (<https://arisefamily.org/>). A follow up workshop attended by 10 people was held in September, facilitated by Dr Selina Palm and I, being RUC members with experience in the field. The focus was 'moving from words to actions'. We based our discussion on the 3 P's of children's rights (based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), namely Provision, Protection and Participation. We focused on the practicalities of what protection and participation look like at RUC and came up with an action plan. Most importantly, we are developing a core group of child safeguarding advocates, and it was encouraging to see individuals motivated, inspired and gaining confidence to use their gifts and creativity to make our RUC spaces safe and child friendly.

In October, Robert and I shared our RUC journey at the Presbytery meeting of the Western Cape and encouraged all the churches to attend child safeguarding training with the intension of developing a policy. We have extended the invite to the Congregational

churches too. Funding and facilitators were put in place for two half-days workshops early 2026 at the Rondebosch United Church.

We continue to try to raise awareness of the importance of child safeguarding at strategic moments during the year, such as at the worship services on 1 June during Child Protection Week 2025 and on 7 December during The 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

We have updated our policy, but we have much work to do to make our policy a reality! Let's consider Jesus' words as written in Mark 10:14: "When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" We simply want to honour and respect children for the precious little people they are.

### **Treasurer (Roy Kempster)**

The meeting will have to approve the budget for 2026.

Please see budget for 2026 and financial report for 2025 attached at the end of the document under addendum.

### **Office Administration (Kate Peart, Marie Iversen, and Robert Steiner)**

#### **Leases, Bookings, and Correspondence (Kate Laburn Peart)**

We have a number of community groups that pay to use our facilities for their meetings. Apart from our main tenant, the Rondebosch United Play School, these include dancing, judo, yoga, symphony choir, 2 men's groups, Artists' Way and a number of small groups from the MCC church. Together, hall rentals bring in a modest but steady income to the church of over R38,500.00 per month. There are also occasional tenants, who use the facilities for meetings, weddings and recitals that add to this total, but these are less predictable/regular.

#### **Data Base (Marie Iversen)**

Please may I ask if your address/phone number/email address changes or family members have moved away or worshipping elsewhere to let me know so that I may update the

church database. Likewise if you would like your birthday/marriage added and reflected in the church weekly notices ([iversenmarie@yahoo.com](mailto:iversenmarie@yahoo.com)).

### **Website and Newsletter (Robert Steiner)**

The website is maintained on a weekly basis, also to access our newsletter or the sermon scripts. Our weekly newsletter is usually sent out on Saturday evening. Please email [info@rondeboschunited.org](mailto:info@rondeboschunited.org) if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

### **Pledge Secretary (Marie Iversen)**

A big thank you to those who continue to support the work/ministry of RUC by their commitment to the church's Planned Giving/Stewardship scheme. We are also deeply grateful to those members who have moved to other countries or SA towns and have continued with their financial contributions.

For the Finance Committee and Church Council knowing what they can expect to receive during the course of the year enables them to plan the church expenditure accordingly.

Amounts can be made directly into the church's bank account using the unique pledge number which will be allocated to you ensuring total confidentiality. (You can also use your name as a reference). There is no minimum or maximum (I'm hoping!) amount and your deposit can either be weekly, monthly, annually (or anything in between). We also respect that people's circumstances can and do change.

I would also stress that paying contributions directly into the church's bank account lessens the security risk of monies being held at the church or being taken to the bank. One can also make deposits via snap scan using your unique code as a reference.

Acknowledgement of funds received is sent out annually.

Should you wish to participate or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me via email at [iversenmarie@yahoo.com](mailto:iversenmarie@yahoo.com).

### **Property Steward (Jacques Matthee)**

The following projects were completed during 2025 :

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1. The church's Toilet facility was renovated and altered to be gender free and one toilet was also equipped to be wheelchair friendly.

The costs of the renovation was R260 000,00

2. The wooden floor of the Chapel classroom was badly worn. We renovated it by screwing a waterproof coated marine ply board to the existing floor planks.

The costs of the renovation was R 23 000,00.

3. The wooden floor of the toddler's toilet was not in a hygienic state. The pine planks were too porous and unsuitable for the constant cleaning that this bathroom requires.

We were informed by the beetle control expert that looks after our property, that the state of the floor timbers are still sound. We renovated this floor by also screwing a marine ply board to the existing floor planks. This board was then coated with a marine floor paint.

The cost of this renovation was R 28 000,00

4. The Organ refurbishment project.

During the period from February to August the electronics of the organ was totally renovated . In addition some mechanical parts were repaired and the Organ facade was renovated.

The total cost of the upgrade came to R1 020 000,00

5. The property committee assisted the Garden committee to revamp the Garden of Remembrance. As part of the alterations of this part of the property, we renovated the church yard and entrance to that.

The cost of upgrading the yard was R 30 400.

6. The main sewer pipeline was totally blocked by a big tree on the Western border of our property. We had to do an emergency replacement of the pipe after removing the tree.

The costs of this was R 14 000,00.

### **A tribute to Julian Cooke :**

It is with great sadness that I bid farewell to such a solid support and member of the Property Committee who served with me for the past 2 years.

During 2024 in particular, we were assisting Council with very sensitive and complex decisions regarding the construction of the gender free toilets, the construction of the boundary wall and the planning of the garden of remembrance. On some of these issues we had to go back to the drawing board many, many times!

I will miss Julian's experience, his clear thinking and always his fine sense of humour !!

### **Garden of Remembrance (Sue Smith)**

First discussions around the Memorial Garden's revamp started in 2023 and I was very pleased to eventually complete the major part of the renovation during the fourth quarter of 2025.

A huge amount of undergrowth had to be cleared and a couple of trees removed to allow for light to filter into the area for plant growth. New soil and fertilizer were ploughed into the area and a Terrafoce brick edging was installed to define the flower bed.

The original plan and direction had to be tailored to meet our budget, but in the end, I feel we achieved the objective which was to honor our loved ones, whose new memorial plaques have been installed in the garden and to create in an area of tranquility for the congregation to enjoy.

We still need to address the pathway and have retained some of the budget to hopefully have an attractive brick pathway surface laid during this year.

Our grateful thanks to few members who kindly donated to the project to enable us to buy the majority of plants and the three benches.

My special thanks to Heidi, Jacques, Kathrin, Vuli and Darroch, who made it all happen!

### **Fundraising (Heidi Segal)**

Our Christmas Market provided our local vendors and creatives with an opportunity to sell their wares. This year we had 13 vendors sell Christmas treats, cards, baked goods, artworks, ceramics, beaded jewellery, and shweshwe linen. Delicious light meals were available thanks to Mike and Cynthia Mazalek which helped to add some festive cheer. All funds raised went to SPF to support our various partner projects.

As seems to be the trend with our community, our fundraising events are more FUN than FUNdraising, and so it should be. We hosted a magical Soiree, showcasing our talented musicians, and a Brass Concert, which was once again sold out.

We received cash and in-kind donations, totalling R73000, towards renovation of our Garden of Remembrance. We are grateful for all your support in helping us complete this project.

We also received significant contributions to our Legacies Fund in 2025, which we could draw from when monthly giving was less than anticipated. Please consider your future contribution as a way of continuing to create circles of dignity through Rondebosch United Church for generations to come.

#### **IV. WORSHIP**

##### **Online Services**

Our online services have continued throughout 2025. A big thank you to Aristide Akimana (with Prince Makoko being on standby) for his commitment to edit and upload the services. The online services have been a special blessing for those who could not attend our in person services because of illness or reduced mobility.

##### **Music and Worship (Willem Luitingh)**

“All the Levites who were musicians — Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives — stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang:

He is good;  
his love endures forever.”

-2 Chronicles 5:12-13

As the organist, pianist and choirmaster of RUC, it is my pleasure to present an overview of the music ministry activities during 2025.

We were richly blessed last year with a busy and active music program. Throughout 2025 the music during services was thoughtfully prepared and passionately offered, primarily by members of our own congregation, along with a few welcomed guest musicians. The RUC Choir has shown continued growth, both in membership and in musical excellence, as reflected in the anthems presented during services.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all our musicians (including our choir members) — both amateur and professional — for their invaluable contributions to the RUC music ministry.

Here are a few highlights of the church year where music played an integral part, not only in our weekly services, but also at other gatherings:

- 29 March 2025: RUC Soirée – Falling in love...again
- 20 April 2025: Easter Service
- 6 July 2025: Introduction of our restored organ
- 8 September 2025: Cape Town Concert Brass Concert
- 21 December 2025: Carol Service
- 25 December 2025: Christmas Service

During 2025, RUC completed a major upgrade to its Norman & Beard pipe organ through the installation of Solid-State digital components. This upgrade has significantly extended the life of the instrument, resolved longstanding mechanical and pneumatic issues, and greatly improved reliability and functionality.

The new digital relay system has eliminated problems such as noisy action, faulty contacts, slow response, and dead notes. Enhancements to the organ console now include fully functional pistons, multiple memory levels, moving draw stops, MIDI sequencer control, and recording capabilities, allowing for greater flexibility in worship and music ministry.

The congregation now benefits from a fully operational, dependable instrument, enabling a broader and more efficient performance of organ repertoire.

Sincere thanks are extended to Cooper, Gill & Tomkins Organ Builders for their professional work, as well as to Jacques Matthee for his expertise and coordination. Appreciation is also given to cabinet makers Max Tyrell and Ben Clatworthy for the new organ screens.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to our benefactors — the late Nancy and Michael van Breda and Zier and Jennifer Roeleveldt — and to all congregation members whose generous contributions made this project possible.

With grateful hearts, we praise God for His abundant blessings.

### **Welcomers at the Door (Fiona McLennan)**

The welcomers continue to bring warmth and friendliness to everyone coming in through our front door before a service!

Thank you to Annette Newmarch, Helen Hutchison, Geraldine McPherson, Caitlin Pearce, Ingrid Curry, Lynne Pretorius, Ros Irlam, Ross Metcalfe and Tessa Kennedy, Cheryl Hewson, Lizzy Malala, Ann-Gail Watson, and Natalie and Paul Duff.

Lizzy, Paul and Natalie have left for other parts of SA and will be greatly missed.

We are so grateful for the loving kindness with which everyone has welcomed newcomers and regular attendees. We would love to have a few more people join us in this ministry. Please speak to me or to Robert should you be interested.

## **V. PASTORAL**

### **Birthdays (Marie Iversen)**

I love birthdays and hope you do too. An opportunity to celebrate with family and friends. We would love to send you birthday wishes and with the non-existent state of the postal services it is easier to do it via whatsapp. So please, if you are not getting a message from RUC on your special day, please send me your date of birth and your whatsapp number. Thank you Marie ([iversenmarie@yahoo.com](mailto:iversenmarie@yahoo.com)).

### **Visitation Team (Fiona McLennan)**

The Visiting Team is a group of people who have offered to support various individuals and families in the congregation. This is mostly focused on people who for some reason cannot come to church, for example if they are bed bound, or to offer extra support to people who are seriously ill or having a particularly difficult time. It is a ministry of friendship and support and while we hope each visit brings pleasure to the person we visit, we also benefit from getting to know other individuals in our congregation and building deeper relationships with them. It is very fulfilling being able to support someone in this way.

If you feel you are called to join this ministry, please speak to either Robert or Fiona.

### **Red Cross Childrens Hospital (Robert Steiner)**

Ingrid Matthee and Robert have continued their pastoral ministry at the hospital. They are part of an interfaith team and visit the hospital once a week. We are presently looking for more volunteers. Please speak to Robert if you are interested in this ministry and would like to know more about it.

### **The Rondebosch Police Prayer Support Group (Robert Steiner)**

Robert is leading the prayer meetings on the first Wednesday of every month at 8am at the police station. Jimmy Baigrie continued to join our meetings in 2025. They are attended by the station's staff members who share some of the challenges the police station faces. Our support of their important work in the community is much appreciated. Please feel free to contact Robert if you would like to join the monthly meetings.

### **Prayer Circle (Judy Cooke)**

The Prayer Circle has had a very good year through its effective connecting mechanism of the WhatsApp group and monthly updating and prayer meetings, with our minister Robert giving us insightful reflections on our prayer journey at this time.

The established pattern of gathering in one of our group members' homes - with a welcome cup of tea to start, followed by sitting around our prayer candle which we light, to update and pray about people and situations as they have presented themselves to us, as well as ongoing concerns – and ending with our standing in a circle round our candle, saying the Grace together, with a final Shalom – has become a familiar pattern which we find sustaining and strengthening, and peace-bringing. We are richly blessed and give thanks for the dedication and commitment of our members to this ministry, its sustainability bolstered by the boundaries we have set around access for prayer requests to the WhatsApp group, as well as the maintenance of confidentiality, both important aspects of our functioning. With the joy and privilege of upholding prayers of heartbreak and prayers of joy, we rejoice in our Prayer Circle, and look forward to another year of praying, sharing and learning, of the sorrows and joys in our congregation and the wide and struggling world around us.

## VI. MINISTRIES

### Holy Circus and Youth (Robert Steiner)

A big thank you to Amy, Megan, Hannah, Joshua, Morgan, and Jamie for their commitment to the Holy Circus and the Youth in 2025. The children and young people love our teachers and we have been truly blessed to have them as our Sunday School leaders. Rev Glynis Goyns kindly joins us for our weekly meetings and has been a wonderful support as we brainstorm and craft our Sunday morning sessions for the children and youth.

### Confirmation Class (Robert Steiner)

In 2025 we only had one confirmation student who attended monthly classes.

### RUC Young Adults – A Ministry of Accompaniment (Selina Palm)

RUC Young Adults met in Seapoint for six Table Talks over a home cooked meal in the last year as well as holding two Saunders beach picnics with themes including reflecting on pleasure, integrative spiritual practices and engaging critically with issues of sexual purity.



This builds on our series from last year on issues of justice and we were delighted to host Alex Pennington and Nicole Terra as two more 'young at heart' guests here for some intergenerational engagement as well as welcoming some new young adult members for 2026. Ongoing pastoral care through one on one catch ups continues, especially with some of our most vulnerable young adults.

Opportunities were also opened for some of our young adults to attend a multi-day Human Sexuality Workshop with Selina Palm and Laurie Gaum and to apply to attend a global 3-month course on Faith and Helping Children thrive without Violence.



Amy, our graduate who is also studying social work at UCT as well as being a Holy Circus teacher, brought her own experience of child participation at RUC into this interfaith course to share with other around the world:

“The greatest value that I learnt growing up in the church is to love other people, because God loves us, and other people love us. A way that I experienced this was through the simple act of being included in communion as a child. It meant a lot to be engaging in this kind of ritual alongside the adults. It felt like I was a valuable part of the community. At the church I'm currently at, children are not just included in communion but invited to help serve it. I think more faith leaders should do that, as I really believe it's vital for children to feel included in important rituals like this in order to feel safe at church”.

**Guitar Ministry at U-Turn (Robert Steiner)**

Weekly guitar sessions at U-Turn’s Powerhouse continued in 2025. The group attendance varied between 5 to 10 people. Some of the students made tremendous progress.



## **Flower Ministry (Michele Kendall)**

### 1) INTRODUCTION

There are 15 members from the Rondebosch United Church congregation, who volunteers their time to arrange a vase of flowers for the Sunday morning services. RUC has collected over time a number of vases of different heights, shapes and colour. Each volunteer is welcome to use of one of these vases or their own vase to arrange a design they wish to present. There is a guide line of flower colour according to various stages of Biblical events, but on the whole each volunteer has freedom to express their creation.

A time Roster is organized at the beginning of each year for volunteers to secure their dates or the Sunday arrangements. Susan Davies, after each service shall distribute the flower arrangements to the congregation or to a birthday member for example. The head of department, then on a weekly basis, reminds each member of their time slot.

### 2) VOLUNTEERS

The flower arranger has the following duties:

- Buy their own flowers and any other decorating materials
- Organise with RUC caretaker, Vuli Mtshikwana, access to the church
- Prepare the arrangement before the 09h30 Sunday service

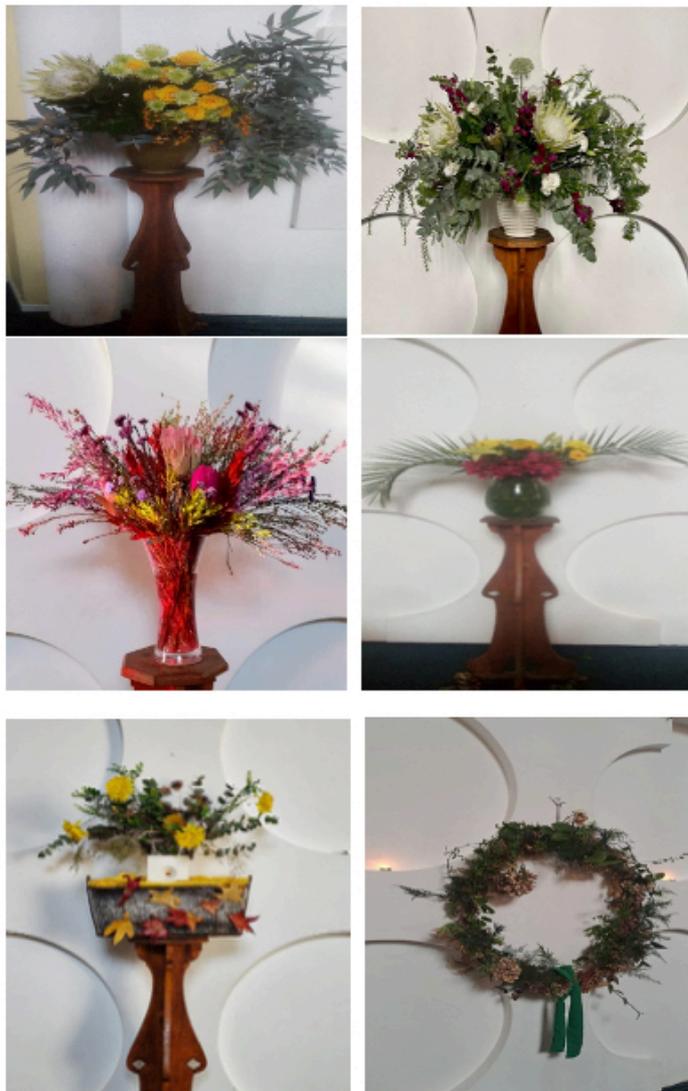
During May 2025, Kathrin Krause, had announced that she was Immigrating back to Germany and had met with Michele Kendall, where she asked if she could take over her position as head organizer. Michele agreed and took over the reins. The end of the year, Natalie Duff and her husband moved away from Cape Town to retire. We are now 13 volunteers.

### 3) SPONSORS

Should anyone of our congregation which to sponsor any of our flower arrangers to create a flower arrangement in memory of a special person or event, this is done so by a monetary sponsor by the church member.

### 4) COMMUNICATION

Besides having the roster scheduled for the following year, there is also a group chat set up per WhatsApp. This works well as the Flower Volunteers or Flower Angels as we also call ourselves, share other Floral events happening in and around Cape Town.



## 5) EVENTS

From time to time there are outings or teas or workshops that the head organizer arranges.

This year, there was a wonderful tea held for the volunteers in August. Later in the Spring, a few of us went to visit the Flower Festival in Stellenbosch. If there is a speaker or presenter to be paid, we do ask RUC if there is a budget for us to pay them before any arrangements are made. Otherwise the volunteers are all eager in contributing to what they can for a successful event.

A special THANK YOU goes out to Karin Schmidt who arranged the wooden FLOWER ANGELS – Keyrings for our volunteers. A photo at the end of this report.

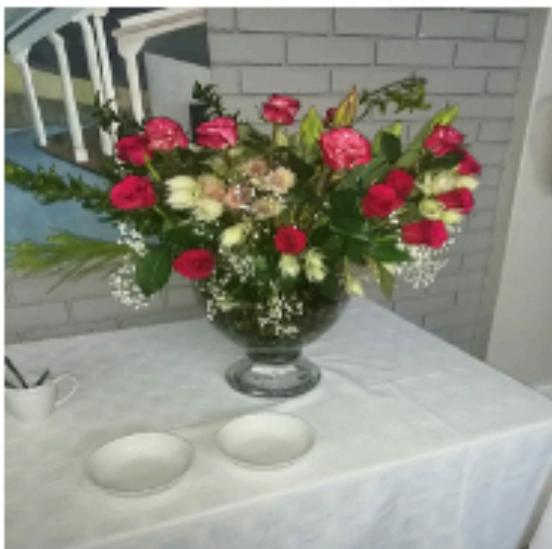
### Names of our volunteers

Christine Rodseth (previous head of Flower Ministry)

Kathrin Krause (left during 2025) (Previous head of Flower Ministry)

Louise Cull, Karin Anne Schmidt, Vulisango Mtshikwana, Moira Irlam, Tessa Kennedy, Cheryl Hewson, Ingrid Mathee, Lyn de Boer, Susan Davies, Natalie Duff (left during 2025), Sue Smith, Fiona Mclennan, Michele Kendall.

It has been wonderful in working with our gifted volunteers, who each have a special, creative talent to share with Rondebosch United Church.





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## VII. EDUCATION, SPIRITUAL FORMATION, AND FELLOWSHIP

### **"Manna & Milo (Amy Irlam)**

Manna and Milo (named after the first book we read together, Manna and Mercy) is the affectionate term for our weekly young adult meet ups. We eat popcorn, drink milo and discuss life and faith. We have just recently started exploring new material called Simplicity, Love and Justice which is challenging us to think about how living the Jesus way challenges us to live simply in the way we spend our time, money, energy and more. Meetings are informal in structure, and always open to new members with no pressure to join every week.

### **Sermon Discussions (Beryl Botman)**

We are grateful to God that we could continue our monthly sermon discussion sessions on the second Tuesday. Because some members found it increasingly difficult to travel at night, we also introduced a Sunday after service group every third Sunday. The Tuesday group attendance vary from four to six and on Sundays between three and eight. Both discussions are informal with the Tuesday discussion more reflective with some preparation to discuss the general and personal meaning and interpretation of the sermon. They last between 30 and 45 minutes with the Tuesday group also gathering around a simple sharing of community at rotating venues.

The sermons continue to stimulate, inspire, challenge and console us in our daily lives in our journey to live closer to God and one another.

Thanks be to God.

### **Creation Care Group (Nicky Sasman)**

The church continued with its substantial calendar of events and the minister continues to grow the theological basis for creation being integral to our understanding of the nature of God and our role in its care.

March: Robert included a creation care component to Lent.

April: a contingent of 9 members of RUC joined the Phillipskop Creation Care weekend to undertake 2 hacks, join reflections on the theological basis for caring for creation, fellowship, and share our respective activities. This consolidated the partnership with Phillipskop, and has set it as an annual event in the RUC calendar.

September: Robert introduced the Season of Creation with the theme of "Choosing Life", and ended it by introducing the "Protea covenant of love" for us to commit to as a church and as individuals. The intervening services took on creation-based themes, with Beulah reminding us of the awe and power of nature; and James preached on the theme: "To be awake is to be alive: Living out a theology of creation care", in which some working group members focusing on the intersect of their work with creation care and climate action.

This Season of Creation was full of activity, including:

- Joining St Thomas' church's guided walk on the Kenilworth Racecourse conservation area
- The Sustainable Lunch team hosting another bring-and-share meal after church, showcasing delicious plant-based, and ethical meat, meals and snacks
- The RUC Gardener's group hosting the annual plant bring & share.

October: St Francis Day remains a highlight as a multi-species service, prompting the more regular church attendance by some, more obedient, canines. Car-free Sunday (and the Cape Town marathon) once again saw the congregation attempt more sustainable ways of travelling to church. Church attendance dropped dramatically (less than half), likely due to the marathon.

December: some church members shared their tips for "gifting for people and plant": gifting, including ethical toiletries & cosmetics, and gift-wrapping. A highlight was the production of the first edition of the RUC online "[Food for Thought: sustainable recipes](#)" booklet.

The "RUC Hiking Group" continues its events, coordinated through a whatsapp group.

While individuals have continued to support the monthly Friends of the Liesbeeck (FOL) clean-ups, this has not had a "champion" to encourage greater RUC involvement.

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Looking ahead, one of the aims of the working group was to expand the influence of RUC's work to a wider audience. Glynis fulfils that role through her work with the Uniting Presbyterian Church. A great opportunity has been given to RUC to drive the regional eco-justice desk of the United Congregational Church. This would involve attendance at the monthly regional mission council meetings, and facilitating any mobilisations from the national synod. A volunteer to fulfil this impactful coordination role is sought! None of the current working group members are able to commit to this, but will offer to host a workshop on what churches are doing later in 2026.

### **RUC Hiking Group (James Irlam)**

We have mostly hiked the Peninsula mountains, and also near Hermanus and Stellenbosch. We cater for all levels of fitness, so all are welcome to join our sociable, nature-loving group. Please contact James on 076 180 9972 if you wish to join.

### **The Artist's Way (Don Shay)**

Since having the opportunity to first run an initial Artist's Way and Artist's Way at Work course for 20+ people from RUC in 2019, I've since run 17 more course and RUC members or affiliated people have participated in many of these. Robert and I are keen to keep this offering going at and for RUC members. A group of seventeen people met Jan-April 2025 in the Church Hall. Courses 18 and 19 are currently happening this year (2026) from Jan-April. A wonderful group of nine people are attending the course Tuesday evening in the RUC Hall. Feedback from people participating in the courses tells a story of helpful insights, enriched authenticity, increased confidence to pursue creative activities, a flourishing of creative and artistic energy, help finding more desirable work opportunities, and satisfaction from being part of a community that shares deeply and cares for each other. Artist's Way author Julia Cameron considers developing our creativity to be a primary path of spiritual development; she develops her idea of regular prayer as a 'hidden' fourth discipline in her 2022 book 'Seeking Wisdom: A Spiritual Path to Creative Connection.' Contact me if you are interested in more information on this or other courses ([don@artesianlife.org](mailto:don@artesianlife.org), 072 160-0277).

## Sound & Soul (Robert Steiner)

We have met every third Thursday evening in our sanctuary to learn how to play the guitar, starting off with some basic chords and exploring the connection between the gift of making music together and spirituality. Guitars are provided and anyone is welcome to join us, including absolute beginners.

## Yoga Classes (Erika Lencses)

### Aim

In 2025, the weekly yoga sessions at RUC continued with renewed energy and purpose. These inclusive classes were designed to serve a wide range of participants — from beginners to seasoned practitioners — and focused on:

- **Reducing stress** through accessible breathwork and mindful relaxation practices.
- **Enhancing physical well-being** with gentle, functional movement and accessible yoga postures (asanas).
- **Fostering mental balance** by promoting a deeper mind-body connection in a supportive and non-competitive environment.

The overarching intention remains the same: to offer a space where healing, calm, and conscious living become more available to all — while simultaneously supporting a powerful community cause.

### Community Impact

Held on a **donation basis**, every cent raised from these classes has gone directly to support the **Masazane Soup Kitchen**, which provides nourishing meals to local school children.

### Attendance & Contribution

- Weekly Monday sessions welcomed **between 7–15 regular participants**, with a mix of ages, backgrounds, and physical abilities.
- **Total donations collected in 2025** amounted to **ZAR 10380.00**, fully transferred to the Masazane Soup Kitchen to support their ongoing food program.
- Several newcomers also expressed interest in continuing their wellness journey beyond the classes, showing that the initiative has lasting personal and social impact.

### **Acknowledgment**

We extend our deepest gratitude to **RUC** for graciously offering the space and moral support that makes these classes possible. Your partnership allows this initiative to thrive and expand. Every class held here contributes not only to individual transformation, but also to alleviating hunger in the most direct and heartfelt way.

Thank you for being part of this movement — one breath, one stretch, one act of kindness at a time.

With appreciation,  
Erika Lencses  
Rapid Transformational Therapist | Yoga Teacher

## **VIII. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### **SmilingOne (Prison Ministry)**

Our partnership with Smiling One ([www.SmilingOne.com](http://www.SmilingOne.com)) continued in 2025 and we remain committed to help with some of their petrol costs. A big thank you to those who have given regularly directly to them or to our Samaritan Partners Fund in order to help cover their travel expenses.

### **Outliers (Laura, Vulisango, Toni-Lee, and Heidi)**

Together with you, our valued supporters, we provided quality education to 3000 learners across 25 communities in 2025. The challenge of providing quality education in under-resourced communities is compounded by lack of access to basic resources such as nutrition and safety. With your support we were able to distribute back to school stationery to learners who need it most.

The church hall serves as a safe place for community-based after-school programs to access training to increase their ability to provide quality education. Through organizational capacity development, after-school programs are able to provide quality education for learners every year. Team leaders were mentored to help align their vision and mission with activities that ensured goals for their learners were met.

“You have equipped us with so much more than I think you can even know. May your organization be abundantly blessed. May your cup overflow.” Liezel September

In 2025, we concluded a 2-year collaborative research project on making self-care accessible to community care workers. This co-design process resulted in a wellbeing module that helps team members consider self-care in their context, support each other, and identify ways to combat burn-out and fatigue.

Access to quality education breaks the poverty cycle. Together with community partners, collaborators, and you, we are building comprehensive learner support systems that continue to provide children with quality education. As the learner thrives, so too does the family and the community.

**Thank you for being part of our village.**



### **Masazane Soup Kitchen and Child Protection Project (Claudine Bill)**

In 2025, our team of gogos continued to provide meals to over 400 children, four days a week, at Mbekweni Primary School in Paarl, under the leadership of Martha Mdingi. Over 56 000 meals were served during the course of the year – an amazing feat!

We were pleased that Nomhle Loholo was able to get a permanent job at a local school at the start of the year, and her place was filled by Dila Wellum who returned after a period of ill health. Sadly, towards the end of the year, Nontobeko Noremela became seriously ill, and passed away in January 2026. Her quiet but steadfast presence in the Masazane soup kitchen and her compassion and dedication to the children will be missed.

We have been at our current site for ten years, and our container was due for some much-needed maintenance. In 2025 we had installed new cupboards with much stronger shelves to store the goods that we buy in bulk; a new counter at the serving hatch; and tiled the area around the sink. We also replaced our old fridge, thanks to a donation.

We receive ongoing support from Mbekweni Primary School's principal, Mr. Michael Njenxa and his staff. The school hosts our container and provides us with a safe space for this important work to be carried out. We could not do this work without the support of Bethel Congregational Church in Paarl, and in particular, Shireen Willemse, our project manager. She does all the hard work of purchasing food and making sure that the kitchen is running well and stipends paid on time.

In December, Christmas gifts were once again put together for 200 needy children who were identified by the gogos. These provided the children with their essential stationery requirements for school, some basic hygiene items, and a few treats! Once more, we were blessed with generous donations that meant that we did not have to use funds from our normal running costs to fund these simple gifts.

We are also very grateful for the support from Rondebosch United Church and our loyal supporters who keep this project going. Your generosity sustains the work the team does to feed hungry children in Mbekweni. In a country that has enormous problems that include extremely high rates of hunger, inequality and poverty, problems with education, crime and corruption, this little project holds its head up high and continues to be good news!

### **Thembi's Soup Kitchen in Langa (Judy Cooke)**

The Langa Soup Kitchen operates in the Langa Flats, close to Bhunga Avenue, the main entrance to Langa, off the N2. It started operating in May 2020, when the Covid Lockdown was implemented, and has continued serving food twice a week to hungry children in Langa for the three years since then. Thembekile Nxesi, who initiated and leads the project, lives in the Langa Flats, and uses her kitchen to prepare and cook the food for the children, with two assistants, neighbours of hers, who help with the preparation and serving of the food, and receive a small monthly stipend for this. This system is working very well, with the local community recognizing the value of the soup kitchen for their children.

During 2025, the numbers of children attending the soup kitchen increased to between 80 and 100 at each session. Thembekile meanwhile was reporting the worrying trend of increased unemployment and gangsterism in the community, with the rise in

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unemployment and the ever-increasing price of food. The Kitchen was able to provide the extra needed through the generous contributions of friends of Rondebosch United Church overseas, as well as individual members of the church, financially or in kind. Wonderful to report that overseas friends had provided sufficient funding to cover the whole of the 2025 year.

It is a cause of enormous thankfulness for the generosity with which we are surrounded, that the Langa Soup Kitchen is providing regular, although not daily, feeding for children whose families can less and less afford to feed them adequately. The project is thus helping to instil hope and encouragement in the Langa community as a whole.

### **ADDENDUM: FINANCIAL REPORT (Roy Kempster)**

# Rondebosch United Church

## Financial Overview - January to December 2026

The last few years have focussed on core church operations and various significant property projects -  
- organ, flat, garden of remembrance, toilets  
We received large bequests and donations which funded the projects

The current years budget is aimed at covering only necessary costs and a provision for council discretion community projects of R120 000.

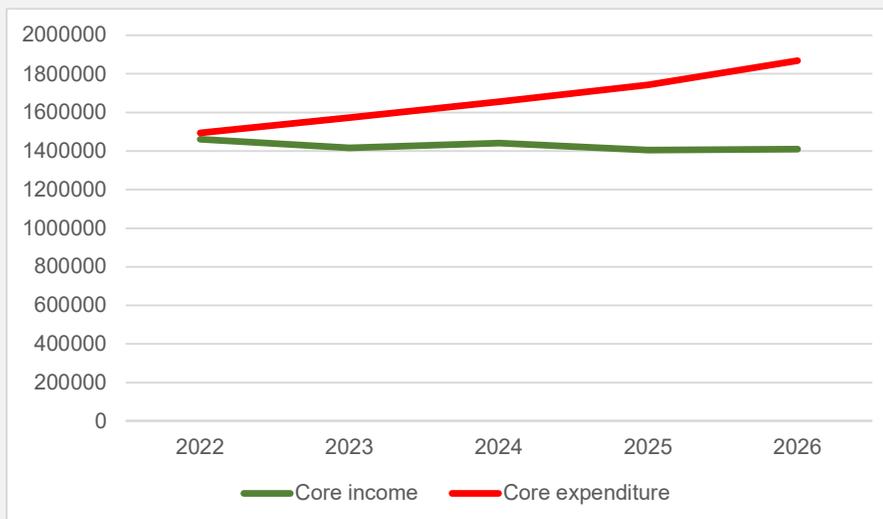
We are considering strategies to improve the financial sustainability of our church model

2026 Budgeted loss including provision of R120000 for community projects	<u>R458,413</u>
To be funded by drawing investment income/capital	

Current (Jan 2026) investments at cost , invested mainly in balanced risk unit trusts	<u>R4,096,953</u>
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A notable item that should be explored, is that our pledge (and other core) giving has remained largely static for the last four years. Our expenses haven't.

A graph of our core giving vs our core church operational costs (excluding property related) -



If we incurred any major property costs, our financial sustainability could come into question

Other -

- Council resolved that all fund raising income will be on behalf of Samaritan Partners Fund
- The 2024 and 2025 audits underway

## Rondebosch United Church

### Summary Budget - January to December 2026

	<b>2026 Budget</b>	<b>2025 Actual</b>
Core Income	-1,405,072	-1,405,072
Other Income	-5,000	-75,560
Assessments	290,074	304,997
Administration	176,430	169,173
Staff Costs	1,467,158	1,384,115
Meeting Costs - General	62,112	93,330
Property - Net (ex Assessments and Staff)	-292,289	-209,114
Projects	165,000	798,167
Fundraising	0	-16,178
<b>Net Loss</b>	<b>458,413</b>	<b>1,043,858</b>
<b>Average Monthly Loss</b>	<b>38,201</b>	

## Rondebosch United Church

### Detailed Budget - January to December 2026

<u>Desc</u>	<u>2026 Notes</u>	<u>2026 Budget</u>	<u>2025 Actual</u>
<b>Core Income</b>		<b>-1,405,072</b>	<b>-1,405,072</b>
Collections & Offerings	Assume at least the same	-91,393	-91,393
Pledge Income	Assume at least the same	-1,297,579	-1,297,579
Online Viewers	Assume at least the same	-16,100	-16,100
<b>Other Income</b>		<b>-5,000</b>	<b>-75,560</b>
Interest		-5,000	-75,560
<b>Assessments</b>		<b>290,074</b>	<b>304,997</b>
Assessment - UPCSA	7.5% of income	136,730	92,357
Assessment - Presbytery Western Cape	2% of income	36,461	25,478
Assessment - SA Synod - UCCSA	5% of income	97,403	78,612
Assessment - UCCSA- Peninsula Regional	1% of income	19,480	108,550
<b>Administration</b>		<b>176,430</b>	<b>169,173</b>
Interest Paid	Tenant deposit	2,200	2,240
Licensing	5% increase	2,347	2,235
Telephone & Fax	5% increase	3,347	3,188
Audit fees	5% increase	31,500	30,000
Bank Charges	5% increase	6,371	6,068
Computer Expenses	5% increase	41,497	39,521
Depreciation - Other equipment		14,400	14,400
General Stationery	5% increase	10,046	9,568
Insurance	R59927 + 8%	64,721	61,953
<b>Staff Costs</b>		<b>1,467,158</b>	<b>1,384,115</b>
Salaries	6% increase	1,070,708	1,010,102
Salaries - Facilities Manager	6% increase	134,287	126,686
Salaries - Pension Minister	6% increase	36,431	34,369
Salaries - Long Leave Minister	6% increase	25,250	23,824
Salaries - Medical Aid	6% increase	178,214	168,126
Salaries - Pension Facilities Manager	6% increase	22,268	21,008
<b>Meeting Costs - General</b>		<b>62,112</b>	<b>93,330</b>
Catering Expenses	5% increase	10,800	10,286
Flower Ministry		1,000	290
Gifts		1,000	693
Meeting Costs - General	5% increase	9,886	7,889
Pulpit fees	5% increase	16,905	16,100
Piano / Marimbas Maintenance		9,250	9,250
Organ Maintenance		12,000	47,612
Holy Circus	5% increase	1,271	1,210

<b>Property - Net cost (ex Assessments and Staff)</b>		<b>-292,289</b>	<b>-209,114</b>
Rent	5% increase	-538,000	-511,948
Cleaning Expenses	5% increase	21,317	20,302
Electricity and Water - Church	8% increase	54,578	50,535
Electricity, Water and Gas - Hall	Includes recovery from RUPC - 8%	16,968	15,711
Property Maintenance		120,000	185,002
Property Security	5% increase	18,543	17,660
Refuse & Sewerage	5% increase	14,305	13,624
<b>Projects</b>		<b>165,000</b>	<b>798,167</b>
Garden Memorial Funds		0	-49,650
Garden of Remembrance		45,000	174,978
Organ - Project		0	505,170
Toilets - Project		0	167,669
Community projects		120,000	0
<b>Fundraising</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>-16,178</b>
Fund Raising		-35,000	-16,178
Fundraising SPF		35,000	
<b>Net Loss</b>		<b>458,413</b>	<b>1,043,858</b>