

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP

to launch the

Spearwood Uniting Church

Centenary Book 1913 to 2013

On Sunday 7 July 2013

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

My wife Pat and I are delighted to be here this afternoon to share in the celebration of a milestone occasion; the centenary year of the Spearwood Uniting Church and the launch of the book in recognition and memory of the long and proud history of this Church, its people and the community it continues to serve.

As we know, before European settlement, the Nyungar people had cared for this land for tens of thousands of years. They walked the land using only what they needed to raise their families and to protect themselves from the harsh elements that existed in the Nyungar Nation.

It is only in more recent times that we are coming to learn about the values they placed on the environment and the balance of nature that had existed in what Europeans first spoke of as that 'far off land'.

I note that the Uniting Church of Australia has agreed to live with and share a common call with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in Australia and I commend the Church for having taken this initiative.

I acknowledge the Nyungar people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we have gathered today and I pay respect to their Elders; both past and present of the Nyungar Nation and extend that respect to Indigenous Australians who may be present this afternoon.

I acknowledge the presence of:

- Reverend Raymond Clee and all Ministerial Appointments to the Church;
- Lay Preachers and former Lay Preachers of the Church;
- Mrs Sandy Scott, Ladies Guild President and other former Guild Presidents and Members;
- Members of the Spearwood Uniting Church Congregation and those from other Churches;
- Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

From its humble beginnings in 1913 this Church has and always will have a strong connection with the pioneering families of the Spearwood District and beyond.

In 1963, the Golden Jubilee of the Church an extract from the Jubilee Service brochure stated:

“We of this generation are apt to lose sight (or even be quite ignorant) of our heritage, and of the labours of those who were responsible for bequeathing it to us. The names Green, Tylee, Rigby, Straughair, Hyam, Honeysett, Rose, Watson, Whitehead, Hines, Fletcher, Pearce, Rocke, Boon, Batten, Hodges, McLeod, Lavars and Patterson should always be honoured.”

Today we honour those same people and acknowledge the many others who have served this Church throughout its history.

Many of the descendants of those pioneering families are here today as members or friends of the Church’s congregation.

Their contributions are reflected in the necessary research, collection and collation of the data, the photographs, the decisions around the content of the book, its editing, design and formal registration, and finally its publication.

What a mammoth task and responsibility from volunteers across the Church community who brought an unparalleled passion, commitment and dedication to producing this gift (the book) for its congregation and generations to come.

The book provides an interesting and informative insight into the Church's history and the people who have faithfully served it over time.

While their names are included in the 'Acknowledgement Section' of the book I take this opportunity to read them to you:

Diane Stuart, David Armstrong, Reverend Alan Matthews, Arnold Peterson, Marion and John Cardwell, Reverend Norman Hogg, Sandy Scott, Dot Hopkins, Audrey Fraser, Reverend John Smith, Paul Howard, Joyce Holloway, Dorothy Berry, Reverend Owen Roberts, Reverend Doctor Des Brockway, Graeme Cake, Elizabeth Walton, the van der Walt family, Katherine Wallace, Belinda Belton and Louise Burch.

There can be no better outcome when people come together for a common cause and we thank them for their contribution to the publication.

Built just 84 years after the founding of the Swan River Colony the Church maintains a unique place in our history.

While its surroundings have changed over time with the once flourishing market gardens, flower gardens, vineyards, orchards, piggeries, dairies and abattoirs making way for the residential, commercial and retail settings that reflect Cockburn's growth into a vibrant and progressive City exceeding 100,000 people one thing will never change.

That is; the Spearwood Uniting Church's place in our community where people have gathered in friendship to worship and importantly as a place from where the congregation has reached out to serve the community in God's name for 100 years.

The centenary celebrations organised by the Ladies Guild over this weekend have showcased the Church's history by involving and engaging the community in the same manner as the members of the Ladies Guilds of the past.

My congratulations to each and every one of you as the next page in the Church's history is turned – for those of you here today you will in some way influence the words on each successive page as the future unfolds.

To the Reverend Raymond Clee, I thank you and your congregation for providing Pat & I with the honour of being involved in the centenary celebrations of the Church.

Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys I have great pleasure in formally launching the book outlining the history of the Spearwood Uniting Church in its Centenary year.

Thank you. May God Bless you all?