

Bethany Trust Update July 25

Ministry of Works: serving in practical ways

If you've ever walked through the church grounds on a Monday morning and caught the scent of fresh coffee, the sound of laughter, or the hum of power tools, chances are you've stumbled upon the quiet force behind many of the improvements and repairs around the place — the Ministry of Works.

No, not a government department, though they might rival one for sheer output. The Ministry of Works (or MoW, affectionately misheard as “the mowers” by the younger crowd) is a team of volunteers who show up week after week to do the behind-the-scenes work that keeps our church buildings and grounds functioning, welcoming, and well-maintained.

An Organic Beginning

Though the name might suggest bureaucracy, the group formed organically. As one member put it, “It originated from a long-standing culture of volunteering that probably dates back to 1957 when the Chapel was built. It sort of gradually evolved without being able to say when.” Many came into the group through retirement, or simply because they had time — and skills — to offer. Some were roped in after doing a one-off job and never really left. Others, like Geoff, got a phone call a week after retirement. “There’s always more work to do than I’d like,” he jokes.

From painting to plumbing, kitchen overhauls to lighting upgrades, ceiling tile replacements to reconditioning trailers — the Ministry of Works has done it all. And they do it with a sense of humour, a deep sense of camaraderie, plenty of banter, and a shared commitment to service.



Not Just a Blokes' or Retirees' Club

But let's be clear: this isn't just a blokes' or retirees' club. It's really just a group of available people—willing hands, generous spirits, and a bit of know-how. Women are welcome too! Some volunteers are retired, others are in between jobs, and a few just want to pick up some skills and give back. You don't need to be a qualified tradesperson—just willing to lend a hand. There's no uniform, no clipboard, no secret handshake. Just a shared desire to serve, and a good sense of humour.

Also, it's not a job for life. If someone is in a season, like in-between jobs, and would like to help out for a shorter period of time, that would be great too.

Toolbox Talks and Project Lists

Their Mondays begin with a “Toolbox Meeting” to ensure everyone is kept safe. Projects are pulled from a whiteboard in the office, curated by the Operations Team and Bethany Trust who help coordinate the never-ending list of needs. There's no shortage of things to do, and somehow, every week the right mix of people show up to tackle the right jobs.

As one volunteer described, “We'll just keep working until we get too hungry and go home.” It might sound casual, but the results speak for themselves.

A Long List of Projects

Ask them what they've worked on, and you'll get a long — and impressive — list:

- Building sand pits
- Building and fixing fences
- Replacing water-stained ceiling tiles
- Painting kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Renovation work on Bethany Trust properties clearing gardens, pruning trees, building props for events
- Preparing for the annual Light Party (which took days of collective effort)
- General building maintenance

The team is constantly adapting, learning, and mentoring. “Even if you don’t know what you’re doing,” someone said, “you’ll learn — and you’ll become useful.”

A Culture of Contribution

What really sets the Ministry of Works apart isn’t just the work — it’s the spirit behind it. There’s joy in what they do, satisfaction in solving problems together, and deep value in simply showing up.



“This place sees a huge amount of traffic every week,” one noted. “Most people wouldn’t realise how much work it takes to keep things ticking over.” And yet, few of these volunteers seek recognition. They just want to be of service.

What’s Next for the Ministry of Works?

If they had one wish? “More people knowing this exists,” said one volunteer. “Just come and walk in. We’ve got coffee, good yarns, and plenty of work.” While they joke about needing an office or a bigger coffee machine, the real need is awareness — and maybe a few more willing hands.

But perhaps the greatest gift the Ministry of Works gives isn’t just maintained buildings — it’s the living example of faith in action. It’s a group of people finding purpose, sharing skills, building friendships, and leaving the place better than they found it. As one volunteer put it: “Faith without works is dead”.

So next Monday morning, follow the sounds of drills and laughter, and come say hello. You might find a place to belong — and a job you never knew you were perfect for.

Keen to find out more?

The Ministry of Works team currently is made up of Steve van der Valk, Geoff Crawford, Ken Potter, Fred Needham, Lloyd Port (who is always on time for morning tea...), Howard Fisher, and Alan Methven. Each of them would love the opportunity to tell you a bit more about their work and how you may be able to help.

