

The Link



December 2009 &
January 2010

Thornleigh Hillcrest
Uniting Church Newsletter

From the Minister

The promise of Advent is made real in the Christ. In the account in Luke, we see a story of very ordinary life. It even appears somewhat messy, as Mary is not yet married to Joseph and they have to make do with emergency accommodation and resources for the night when Jesus is born.

It is into this environment that divine life enters the world. The promise of God is not reserved for the privileged or the well-prepared. It is not even waiting for all sorts of excited preparation, such as many of us understandably engage in for Christmas Day.

The Christ comes quietly into an everyday moment, place and people. This is where the promises of God are likely to be found. We can discover them arising among us, in this place and beyond it, if we look with expectation.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

O God,

We join the heavenly singing as our lives are lifted in praise for this day.

The stars looked bright above us and the day has dawned with all the promise which lies in the coming of Christ Jesus.

Thanks be to you, O God,

that now we know and believe

that you will always understand our lives because, in Jesus, you have entered this world.

We give you our thanks this day and always. Amen.

Rev Glen

December/January Services

The 8.45am & 10.15am services in December will be led by Glen with the exception of December 13, when David Richardson will lead the service at 8.45am and Rosalie Tregenza the 10.15am service.

From Sunday December 27 until January 31, there will be one combined morning service commencing at 9.30am as follows:

| | |
|---------|-------------------------|
| Dec. 27 | Rev G Renton |
| Jan 3 | Rev G Renton HC |
| 10 | Rev G Renton/Wakefields |
| 17 | R Tregenza |
| 24 | Rev G Renton |
| 31 | Elders to arrange |

Church Family News

Remember in your prayers:

* Dick Craymer, Robyn King, John McGregor, Stephen and Yen Craymer, Mavis & Gordon Price; our missionaries – Richard and Lindsey Parker in South Africa, and the Wakefield family in PNG.

* Pastor Will & Mrs Betty Pearson and the congregation in Broken Hill.

For the Diary

PRAYER TIME – Saturday December 5 from 9 to 10am in the heritage chapel. There will be an opportunity to pray for the mission planning and its implementation in 2010, as well as for other needs.

WORSHIP COMMITTEES:

Monday Jan 18 at 7.45pm – the 8.45am committee at the Richardsons'

Wednesday Jan 20 at 7.30pm – the 10.15am committee at the Tregenzas'

MISSION PLANNING DAY

Saturday January 23 2010 in the hall.

Missionary Support for 2010

Throughout the year, our missionaries, Richard and Lindsey Parker and Michael and Rachael Wakefield and family, have faithfully let us know of their work in South Africa and PNG respectively, and we are challenged again to stand with them through our prayers and financial support.

Support pledge forms are now in the church vestibule and you are asked to prayerfully consider how much you feel God is leading you to give month by month (or in some other way) during the coming year. Please place your completed form in the box provided, and if a set of envelopes would be helpful for your regular giving, kindly include your name on the form. It is an encouragement to our missionaries to have some indication of the financial support they can expect for next year.

Please read, in a separate article, extracts from essays which Richard and Lindsey wrote in connection with their recent Candidates Orientation course. We are looking forward to a visit from the Wakefield family to our church early in January.

Shirley Richardson for the Mission Team.

Birthdays

December

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 1 | David Richardson |
| 3 | Yiling McGregor |
| 6 | Doreen Williams |
| 7 | Elaine Gow |
| 8 | Jan Smith |
| 12 | Adam Mulcahy |
| 13 | Gill Mein |
| 14 | John Lodewijks |
| | Nikhil Mathew |
| 16 | Malcolm Whalley |
| 19 | David Firth |
| 25 | Ann Zborowski |
| 27 | David Stowe |
| | Natalie Stowe |
| 28 | Rae Doak |
| 31 | Meiling McGregor |

January

| | |
|----|------------------------|
| 4 | Margaret Craymer |
| 5 | Sam Thompson |
| 7 | Olga Banks |
| 8 | Maya (Mottram) Rangott |
| 11 | Sandra Vicars |
| 14 | Cameron Kirton |
| 18 | Jean Holmes |
| 22 | Jinny Kim |
| 25 | Arnold Witcomb |
| 29 | John McGregor |
| | Lindsey Parker |
| 30 | Stuart Holmes |
| | Richard Parker |

Cluster Group News

The Cluster Group Christmas Party will be held in the hall on SATURDAY DECEMBER 5 at 6.30pm for 7pm. It will take the form of a BBQ (please bring your own meat); salads or desserts/slices and a bottle of soft drink to share would be appreciated.

Any enquiries to Shirley Sharpham or Shirley Richardson.

Second Sunday Club

Sunday, December 13

Day Fellowship

Monday, December 7 (Combined) Ladies' Christmas Party.

How Would Jesus Celebrate His Birthday (Christmas)?

Tom Bandy, in a recent issue of *Australian Leadership*, a South Australian UCA Synod publication, tells a story about a pastor who, in an Advent service, asked the children how Jesus would have celebrated his birthday. The children were unusually pensive and gave unexpected replies.

A six-year-old: "Jesus wouldn't want any cakes; he would want vegetables so that he could give them to poor children so they wouldn't get sick any more."

An eight-year-old: "And Jesus wouldn't sing happy songs, but he'd cry because all his friends at school couldn't come to the party."

One little girl waved her hand wildly to gain the pastor's attention: "Jesus wouldn't need any presents because he already has everything."

Bandy comments that the pastor's strategic plan for the children's talk was in shambles, and so the question was then asked, "Is that how you would celebrate your birthday?"

The question was received with instant shakes of the head. "Oh no," said a little boy. "Mum and Dad don't want me to be like Jesus."

Another little girl said brightly, "We have a regular party, eat cake, sing happy songs and I get lots and lots of presents."

I would like to suggest that perhaps we need to ask ourselves a similar question: would our celebration be different if Jesus were physically present?

I also believe that we need to think about our giving, especially to those who have just about everything. The November issue of *Insights* contained some brochures suggesting financial gifts to those in need (in Australia and overseas) instead of presents to the comparatively 'wealthy'.

Everything in Common – the Gift Catalogue, published by UnitingWorld, is one such brochure. To quote from that brochure: "Instead of an iTunes voucher or DVD, your gift could provide a crucial eye assessment for a child in the Pacific, help establish a small business for a family in West Papua, support peacemaking in Indonesia or Christian education in India".

You could, for example, then tell your relative/friend that you have paid for fishing nets for a family in PNG to use to improve their food supply.

"In doing so, we reflect the life lived by the early followers of Jesus in Acts 2."

And don't forget the Christmas Bowl offering on Christmas Day (or at other services) – envelopes will be available soon.

David Richardson

The National Committee for Uniting Church Adult Fellowship

(An agency of Assembly)

Is based in New South Wales for the triennium. During their time in office they have the responsibility to organise a celebration, it is open to men and women.

Their Theme is *FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS ...*

WHERE: Greenhills Conference Centre ACT
This is set in a beautiful bushland setting on the outskirts of the ACT.
Guaranteed a peaceful, stress-free and relaxing celebration.

WHEN: 21-25 APRIL, 2010

COST: \$390

SPEAKERS: Rosemary Young
National Director, Frontier Services
Lin Hatfield Dodds
National Director, Uniting Care Services

BIBLE STUDY: Rev. Gregor Henderson
Assembly President 2006-2009

This is a forward notice as bookings need to be in by December 31, 2009

For further information speak to Norma Chambers
(Presbytery Fellowship Contact Person)

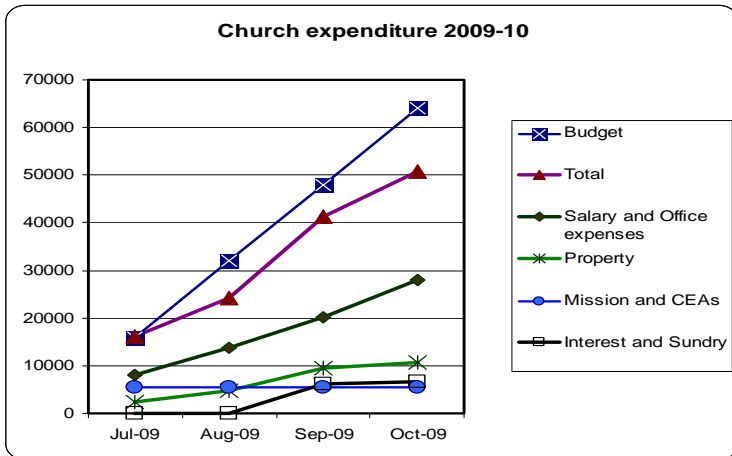
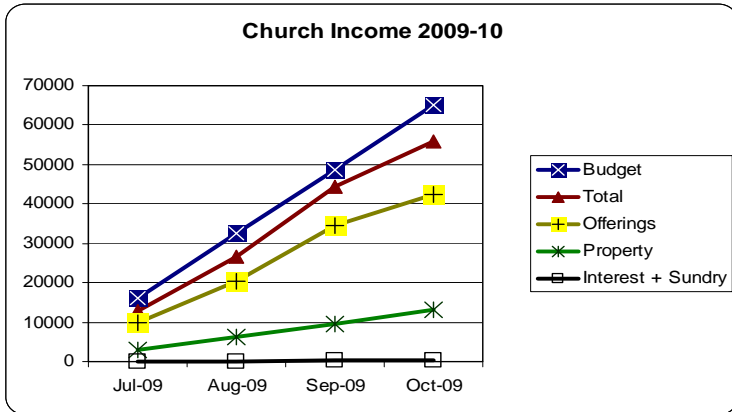
Mingles

Saturday January 16 from 6pm: Planning Meeting

Set this evening aside and bring a plate of food to share at Di and Michael's home. We'll be discussing the format and frequency of meetings for 2010 and planning the year's activities.

If you can't make it to the meeting, please pass your ideas or suggestions to Sue, Brian or one of the other members.

Church Finance



The above figures show budgeted items only. In addition to the above, \$10,077 of contributions from individual members of the church have been passed on to our missionaries, Christian Education Associations, Gideons, Samaritans' Purse and our church's Jesus All About Life campaign.

The church Market Day made a most welcome profit of \$7477, which compares favourably with last year's profit of \$5487. Our church loan balance is currently \$354,952, a reduction of \$15,500 from the balance 12 months ago. Our current loan payment rate is \$40,400 per year and it should be paid off in approximately 14 years from now.

Market Day Results

| | BBQ | Books | Cakes | Craft | Intern. food | Games |
|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|-----------------|--------|
| Sales | 482.55 | 749.15 | 1075.45 | 1068.00 | 889.70 | 201.50 |
| Payments | | | | | | |
| Float | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Profit | 382.55 | 649.15 | 975.45 | 968.00 | 789.70 | 101.50 |
| Expenses | | | | | | |
| Printing | | | | | | |
| Banner | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | |

The congregation of
Thornleigh Hillcrest Uniting Church
(1-3 Paling Street, Thornleigh)

invites you to the annual
Christmas fellowship luncheon
to be held on December 7, 2009
at 12 noon

~~~~~  
There will be food, fellowship  
and carol singing

~~~~~  
Please bring a small plate of food to share

~~~~~  
Please bring a small gift for the Bondi Mission Appeal

~~~~~  
R.S.V.P. 9875 1844

(at time of printing)

| Morning Tea | Plants | Treasures | Trading Post | Toys | Quilt Auction | Total |
|-------------|---------|-----------|--------------|--------|---------------|---------|
| 544.15 | 1131.30 | 1109.10 | 1.83.20 | 358.90 | 560.00 | 9653.00 |
| | | | 5360.00 | | | |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | | |
| 444.15 | 1031.30 | 1009.10 | 847.20 | 258.90 | 560 | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | -250.00 |
| | | | | | | -290.00 |
| | | | | | | 7477.00 |

Carols in the Carpark

On Sunday December 20, commencing with a sausage sizzle at 7pm, the annual *Carols in the Carpark* will be held. Assistance with setting up, cooking, serving etc will be gratefully accepted. Please encourage your family and friends to share in this Christmas celebration, when we hope that many of our church neighbours will also attend.

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE will be held at 8am led by Rev Glen Renton.



What has God Planned for Thornleigh Hillcrest UCA?

Glen Powell from the Synod Board of Mission and Sydney Alliance led the first stage of our discernment of God's plan on Saturday November 21, 2009 with a new approach to the traditional mission planning by stimulating the discernment of who we are and from where we have come.

WHAT ARE OUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THIS DISCERNMENT PROCESS?

(members selected these points & were then asked to cast three votes each)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Renewed enthusiasm (17 votes) | Fresh vision (5) |
| Ownership of our mission (17). | A project to engage in (3) |
| Involvement with the community (15) | Direction (2) |
| Sense of purpose (8) | Feasible steps to fill the church (1) |
| Guidelines for implementation (7) | |

NAME A MAJOR INSPIRATION FOR YOU IN THIS CONGREGATION?

Presentation of "The Messiah" 30 years ago. by a combined churches choir

The first funeral (a very large one) in the new complex showed the potential of the new worship centre.

Achieving the vision of combining two congregations and building a new worship centre.

"40 Days of Purpose" program.

Care, love and support in times of hard going.

Market Day 2009.

WHAT DOES THIS CONGREGATION DO WELL?

People power connecting

Personal invitation

Friendly welcome to church shoppers

Social justice ethos

Care for our members

Loyalty of people showing up for events, worship and other activities

Involvement

Teamwork to distribute 950 Jesus All About Life pamphlets and

400 sausages

WHO IS OUR CHURCH FOR (with numbers of votes)?

Anybody and everybody (6)

Ourselves and our near and far away community (13)

Support for missionaries (9)

The unchurched in the community (12)

Shut-ins, elderly and lonely (10)
Youth (9).

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO OVERHEAR ABOUT THUC IN A BUS SHED CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO STRANGERS?

They made me feel welcome.
I wish I had attended more regularly.
The Bible studies were good.
They have made a difference in my life.
What can we do to stop THUC closing?
They were there when I needed them.
Through them, I came to know Jesus.

WHAT ARE OUR ACTIVITIES AND THOSE OF OTHER GROUPS OPERATING FROM OUR PREMISES and which ones (*) involve members of the local community?

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 worship services | 2 Fellowship groups |
| Church council | Bible studies |
| *Language classes | Banner group |
| *Monday Kids' Time | Cluster group |
| Mingles | Sunday Kids |
| *Seniors luncheons | Second Sunday group |
| *Indoor bowls | Hosanna Presbyterian group |
| *University of Third Age. | *Physical culture group |
| *Playgroups | *Childcare group. |

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO MORE OF IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Playing games (table tennis, cards, board games)(9) | |
| Smelling the roses (2) | Fishing (2 yes, 2 no) |
| Bushwalking (3) | Building(1) |
| Watching the world go by at the coffee shop, coffee and chat(18) | |
| Exercise or walking (6) | Gardening (3 yes 2 no) |
| Listening and chatting (8) | Symphony concerts (3) |
| More time helping friends and neighbours (8) | More time for reading (7) |
| More time with family (but the young ones are too busy) (9) | Art and art galleries (7) |
| Listening to recordings – all types jazz to classic (1) | Travelling (9) |

Glen Powell concluded the day by challenging each of us to do some homework on three key tasks which we agreed stood out in our discussions during the day, and invited those present to put their names forward for membership of each group. ALL MEMBERS of the congregation are invited to participate. Please nominate the group which most suits your gifts and talents:

Group A: Reshaping worship for newcomer friendliness

David Richardson, the Wilcocksons, Jim Mein, Fred King and more

Group B: Reviewing all church groups and users for newcomer friendliness and continued benefit to congregation.

Jan Williamson, Gill Mein , Wilma Anantakrishnan, David Firth,
Steve Williamson, Barry Clark, Shirley Sharpam, Brenda
Geary and more please)

Group C: Organising “meet and eat” dinners:

Bev Dunlop, the Wilcocksons, Di Thom, Allan West, the
Williamsons and more please).

COME JOIN A HOMEWORK TEAM BY CONTACTING THE CONVENOR OF
YOUR INTEREST GROUP (you need not have been at the first workshop
session):

Reshaping worship: David Richardson (9980 8353)

Reviewing church groups etc: Jan Williamson (9875 2262)

Meet and eat dinners: Di Thom (9484 2549)

SEE YOU ALL AT THE NEXT SESSION ON JANUARY 23.

Non-attendance does not prevent anyone coming to the later workshop days.

Jim Mein (Chair, Church Council)

Progress Report from the Planned Giving Task Group

At the request of Church Council, this committee has been given the task of looking at planning and running a program aimed at engaging as many members and adherents of our congregation in examining our commitment to our church's mission. We, the Task Group, have met and agreed that this program needs to be supportive of the Mission Plan under development at present, and, as a result, needs the congregation to accept ownership of the program and its goals.

To this end, we seek your prayerful support and also your feedback, as we consider what we believe are major areas of concern to our congregation:

- Connecting with our community
- Support of our missionaries, the Christian education in schools program, and the Synod 'Living is Giving' program
- Maintenance of existing congregation structures
- New directions?
- Repayment of our church debt.

We ask that you keep our Task Group in your prayers, and, if you have comments or suggestions about our considerations, please let any of our members know.

David Firth on behalf of the Task Group – Fred King, Gill Mein, Debbie Richards, Rev Glen Renton, Steve Williamson.

Purchase Puppets for Presents!

Do you remember Margaret Somerville, the lady who, during the Second World War, rescued 100 Aboriginal children from a Methodist Mission on Croker Island, North East of Darwin? With great difficulty she brought them down to Otford for the duration of WW2. She then took them back to Croker Island where she cared for them for many more years.

I remember, when I was a child, my mother sending, for many years, parcels of colourful, pretty and practical gifts to the children at Croker Island for Christmas.

The Uniting Church Somerville Homes in Darwin are named in her honour, for all the work that she did for the disabled and disadvantaged, mainly Aboriginal people.

Margaret is now 97 years old and has been making finger puppets to raise money for many and varied missions. Over the past 40 years, she has donated almost \$200,000 from the sale of the finger puppets. I visited Margaret last month with Hilda Clark, her lifelong friend. She is still bright and vivacious, with piercing blue eyes and a strong belief that God has led her to do this work.

She asked me to see if I could sell some of her puppets for \$5 each, to enable her to continue to work for missions. (Think of the grandchildren for Christmas!) Margaret has given me 36 samples of her work, so please contact me if you are interested in purchasing these special puppets.

Bev Dunlop



Bible Society News

In a Communist nation where Bibles were effectively banned until 1979, a factory in area equal to 45 quarter-acre house blocks, is now supplying an estimated one quarter of the world's Bibles. This extraordinary facility churns out an incredible one million copies each month, and is capable of producing more than one Bible every second.

A team of Bible Society supporters saw the press in action when they visited China earlier this year.

80% of the Bibles produced by Amity Press in China are distributed across the country through churches, and also by a fleet of vans, many of which are provided by Australian supporters. The vans transport the Bibles to more remote areas.

And yet, despite Amity's massive output, only 60% of Christians in China have access to a Bible. Many people, especially in rural areas, do not have sufficient resources to purchase their own Bible.

By donating the special paper necessary for printing Bibles, Christians from overseas enable Amity to reduce their costs, and to make Bibles more available to Chinese Christians at a price they can afford.

One roll of paper, at a cost of around \$700, produces 500 copies of a standard-sized Bible.

If you would like to offer financial support for the work of Amity Press, please contact the Bible Society:

P.O Box 375
North Ryde NSW 1670

(Phone) 9888 6588

Or to donate online:

www.biblesocietynsw.com.au



Social Responsibility Group

Lent Event 2010: 40 days of giving can make a life worth living

The Lent Event for next year runs from February 17 – April 3, 2010.

The Lent Event raises money to support vital development projects that work towards the alleviation of poverty, community development and recovery from disaster. All projects supported by the Lent Event are overseen by UnitingWorld in collaboration with local partner churches. The six projects for 2010 will be featured in the next few editions of *The Link*.

By going without something for the six weeks of Lent (eg coffee, magazines, chocolate) and putting the money you would spend on these aside for the Lent Event, you can support these important projects.

Project 1: Clean water for Papua New Guinea

The Water Project in Papua New Guinea provides water sanitation facilities to remote communities, giving them access to clean water. Through this project, villages in the Central Province and Milne Bay region are being provided with access to taps and pumps. This ensures that village women no longer have to travel hours every day carrying clean water back to their village. In addition to this, mobile health clinics have been set up in order to support these remote communities, in particular to provide immunisations and prenatal health care for expectant mothers. Your support of the Lent Event in 2010 will enable thousands of people to benefit from these water amenities constructed by local water teams.

Project 2: Agriculture for Timor Leste

The Livelihood Program continues to aid farming communities to survive and support their families. The project provides advice, training, equipment and loans to enable farmers to be more productive. This increases food security both for their families and for those who can purchase the surplus from them. A microcredit program provides loans for the establishment of small businesses such as brick making, furniture making or roadside kiosks. In 2009, 20 farming collectives benefited from this program and with your support the reach of the scheme is scheduled to double in 2010.

For more information, please go to the Lent Event website www.lentevent.com

Melissa Mottram



From the Parkers

This is an extract from the article sent from the Parkers which was not possible to fit into *The Link*. The full article is on the web page at www.thornleigh-hillcrestuca.org.au

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those who are perishing. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.”

Proverbs 31:8-9

It is with great joy that we report to you, our wonderful friends, that Lindsey and I were accepted into WEC International after our time of orientation from August to October. We have now returned to the Siyandlulisa team as we continue our ministry journey.

The journey has taken me (Richard) from Australia in 2003, to South Africa. Then the Lord blessed me with a beautiful and talented wife to share in ministry together.

As I head towards life after 40 (30 Jan), I look forward with excitement to what the Lord has in store for us.

Candidates was a great time of learning, reviewing our ministry up to now and researching and planning for the future. We both wrote assignments as part of

the course: Richard wrote on the issue of youth unemployment, and the need for a discipleship group for the youth, in cooperation with local churches – the end result that youth will gain skills to help them to find employment, and become leaders in their church. Lindsey did her assignment on the lives of children in crèches in the informal settlements, taking into account their social, economic and



cultural contexts. She found important issues to consider in the continuous development of the crèche curriculum and training of the teachers. We would be happy to send you our assignments by email if you would like to read them.

The way ahead ...

Richard will be doing ministry for 20 hours a week and Cultural and Language Learning for the other 20 hours. It is exciting that a lot of the Cultural and Language Learning will take place in the village. This is normal procedure for long-term WEC Workers. In our case the language is Zulu. Pray for Richard and the team as they seek the Lord together as to the best way ahead for him ... step by step.

Lindsey will follow the same pattern as Richard beginning in January. For now, as advised by WEC SA leadership, Lindsey will be taking time off from ministry until the end of the year, to fully recover from burn out. She will spend this time painting and preparing for next year.

Prayer Points

- Lindsey will begin the process of coming off the antidepressants in December. Please pray that she will not experience any negative side effects, and that she will continue to stay healthy.
- Richard's thyroid medication has been increased, please pray that the hormone will stay in balance.
- Richard is running a Youth Leaders Camp on December 8-10. Pray that it will be a good time of relationship building and discipleship.
- Last week we were blessed to receive training from Wendy Dezan (Rainbows of Hope) and Esther Buff (Light Heart Training), in ministry to children at risk and in crisis. Please pray for wisdom for Lindsey as she wishes to further her training in counselling with children. Also as part of WEC requirements she needs to do a year of Bible School studies within the next five years.
- Richard will be going on a trip to Zimbabwe with seven other members of the WEC SA team from November 19-25. He will be taking our car. Please pray for safety and a blessed trip.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

All our love,
Richard and Lindsey



November Church Council

Church Council Executive Meeting

Glen will be released to attend "Training the Trainer" from November 17-19, 2009, which is organised by the Synod Disaster Recovery Committee.

Jim Mein and Glen Renton are working on the congregation's profile.

The office bearers to be nominated for 2010 will be: Chairperson – Jim Mein; Deputy Chairperson – David Firth; Treasurer – Steve Williamson.

Successor for Secretary – No offers have been received to date. Please consider a replacement to be appointed at the Annual General Meeting on December 2.

Members were reminded that Jim Mein will retire as Chairperson in 2010.

The following dates were recommended for **Church Council meetings in 2010**:

February 17, May 19, August 18, November 17. Wednesday nights at 7.30pm.

Reports are due 10 days prior to the meeting date.

The following dates were recommended for **congregational meetings in 2010**:

March 17, 7.30pm; June 20, 2pm; September 15, 7.30pm; December 15, 7.30pm. AGM reports are due on November 28. This matter to be confirmed by the congregation at the AGM.

Mission planning for 2009/2010 commences Saturday November 21 at 9.30am. Follow-up dates are: January 23, February 13, and March 6. Members are encouraged to attend this important process in our church's life. Morning and afternoon tea provided. BYO lunch.

Jesus. All About Life Campaign

The campaign wove through the life of our church – Senior's Lunch, Men's Breakfast, Thornleigh Market Place and the sausage sizzles at Thornleigh station. The church was visible in the community, gave away something free and enjoyed camaraderie working at the sausage sizzles. The Mission Team spent many hours in preparation, assisted by Sausage Sizzle Coordinators, David Firth and Brian Wilcockson and their helpers.

There's been no feedback as yet. Disappointment was expressed in the TV ads. There was no link to the banners and the ad wouldn't have caused people to find out more. These comments will be passed on to Bible Society NSW.

The lack of cooperation from the local churches was disappointing however, Thornleigh Seventh Day Adventist were prepared to help with a letterbox drop and Beecroft Uniting Church offered places in their program for any follow-up we required.

Handing out sausages was good. Approximately 1,000 brochures were handed out between Thornleigh Market Place and the sausage sizzles. A small handful was discarded.

Planned Giving Campaign – This group haven't met but are waiting for the Mission Planning Workshop for direction and the type of program to run.

Worship Services Review

Communion to housebound people – it was recommended that housebound people be visited and the minister take communion, accompanied by one or two elders. Clarification would be sought for the number of housebound people involved.

Recommendations 3 and 4 – the congregation need to decide these matters. Recommendations 1 and 7 were approved by Church Council and recommendations 2-6 were referred to the Annual General Meeting for the congregation's decision.

Worship Committees

Unsolicited mail/lack of room on the noticeboard – Brenda Geary will clean up the noticeboard and refer to someone on the Executive anything she considers necessary. The Executive will look at any unsolicited material.

Noticeboard – the blue colour bleeds off the noticeboard. The Property Committee will see what can be done.

Insights – we are receiving too many copies. The number will be reduced to 75.

Treasurer's Report

Market Day raised \$7442 compared with \$5487 last year. A report for the money raised by each stall will be published in The Link.

The Hosanna Presbyterian congregation donated \$400 to Market Day. Their donation will be formally acknowledged.

There's been a bigger reduction in the Self Help Fund due to the drop in interest rates.

Property Committee – The rent for the preschool will be deferred during January but recovered in full over the calendar year at a negotiated rate.

Mission

The Mission Team will hold a Pancake Event on Shrove Tuesday if it can be arranged.

Jeni Tresize retires as convenor at the end of the year. Church Council thanked Jeni for her efforts as convenor over the last 10 years.

Social Responsibility

The church will be involved in Lent Event with studies, material for worship and a sacrificial offering.

173,000,000 participated at 3,000 events worldwide for Stand Up against World Poverty.

Cluster Group could cover the cost of gifts for the four full-time residents at Gordon House.

Presbytery – Allan West was thanked for his dedication to writing the Presbytery Reports.

Day Fellowship – Church Council will pay the Day Fellowship's fees for UCAF. Letter from Presbytery

This included some items which had missed deadline dates:

Synod nominations – Allan West has asked to be nominated through Presbytery. No other nominations were put forward.

Disaster Response Strategy – Glen provided information which the Secretary forwarded to Brenda Ohye.

Synod Directory – the Secretary emailed Brenda Ohye with changes to the Secretary and Treasurer's details for the 2010 Synod Directory.

Synod Mission Resource Fund – the deadline of February 5, 2010 occurs before the next Church Council meeting. The matter was referred to the Church Council Executive to deal with after the Mission Planning Workshop on November 21.

Church letterbox – Defender will be put in the letterbox and around the plinth to discourage snails. Church Council has authorised a key to be provided to the secretary who will empty the letterbox every Sunday morning and distribute the mail to the addressee.

Twining with Broken Hill – Brenda Geary included a report on their visit in the October issue of The Link and continues swapping weekly notices with Valerie White. Brenda spoke to Will Pearson and is waiting for him to come forward with ideas.

Synod Multicultural Gathering 2009

This occurred at the Salvation Army Conference Centre at Collaroy on October 26-27. There were about 40 attending from Sydney, Canberra, Wagga Wagga, Lismore and Perth WA, including Rev. Tony Floyd, National Director, Multicultural Ministry (from Melbourne) and cross-cultural consultants Rev. Myong Duk Yang and Charissa Suli. Ethnic congregations represented were Tongan, Korean, Samoan, Fijian, Filipino, Arabic and Australian indigenous.

Rev. Kerry Enright (UnitingWorld) spoke on the multicultural nature of his work, particularly from his Maori background, and the need to be catholic (universal) in our attitude. We introduced ourselves and spoke of our joys and struggles; there was a lot of joy being part of the Uniting Church but a struggle with language and acceptance. We were entertained by the young people of the Cecil Gribble (Tongan) congregation at Dee Why. Rev. Veitinia Wacabaca and Apelu, a Samoan UTC student, led us in Bible study with the theme Living Water. Rev. Moses Taupa spoke about rural ministry at Wagga Wagga. There they have an extensive program of activities at two centres as well as ministry to Koreans and Sudanese.

We ended up rejoicing in successes so far, but recognising there is still a long way for ethnic groups to travel.

Extracts from Essays Written by Richard & Lindsay Parker

(Used with their permission)

Under the title of 'The Challenge for Young People in South Africa Today', Richard outlines the great problem of unemployment for young people. He gives the figures of national unemployment at almost 23%, of whom about 75% are young people (that is under 30), and it is believed that 43% of young people between 15 and 24 are unemployed.

Richard sets out the problems of youth finding employment – he writes, 'Most employers require experience and skills. Many young unemployed people have not had any jobs in order to gain experience or to learn skills'.

One person claims that 70% of young people are too discouraged to look for jobs as there are none in their areas and they do not have money for transport. Richard states 'in the area that I minister in, there is a significant lack of jobs and travel to any centre to find work does require a large cost for taxis, especially if you are spending every day looking for work. Many youth also come from low-income households and money to spend on a taxi fare is hard to find, and in most cases this is not a high priority in comparison to food and other immediate needs'.

Lindsey's essay focused on 'children in the informal settlements' and she describes families living in small homes built of scrap metal, often with only one or two rooms. Because of high unemployment, many suffer from a shortage of food; and children, especially during their formative years, lack protein and vitamins.

In doing her research, Lindsey discovered some disturbing figures such as single mothers are attempting to raise about 40% of South Africa's 18 million children with only 29% of black children having two parents.

23% of children live in households where the head of the family is 17 years or younger. The number of orphans has increased dramatically in recent years due mainly to the AIDS scourge.

Lindsey writes, 'Children living in the informal settlements are faced with many challenges and hindrances to their normal development. The socio-economic status of their families does not afford them the luxury of formal preschool education. Hence the many 'backyard' crèches in the townships fulfil an important role in the community'.

Richard and Lindsey are dedicated to this vital work of assisting young people and small children. If you would like to read these comprehensive and enlightening essays in full, please speak to Bob Parker.

Important Dates for 2009/10

Elders' meetings 2010

Retreat Saturday, March 27
Monday April 19 at 7.30pm
Monday July 19 at 7.30pm
Monday October 18 at 7.30pm

Church council 2010

February 17
May 19
August 18
November 17

Congregational meeting 2009

Wednesday December 2 at 7.30pm

Working bee

January 29, 2010

There is nothing you can do that will make God love you less.
There is nothing you can do to make God love you more.
God's love for you is infinite, perfect, and eternal

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Diary Dates

- **KYB** (Know Your Bible) meets at 10.30am each Monday.
- **Ashleigh Lodge Service** is on the third Sunday of the month at 10.45am.
- **Kids' Time** meets at 4-6pm on Mondays in school terms.
- **THE PIT** is in recess.
- **Indoor Bowls** meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at 1pm.
- **Day Fellowship** meets on the fourth Monday of the month at 1pm, and at other times for outings.
- **Friendship Group** meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 8pm.
- **Second Sunday Club** meets on the second Sunday of the month at 4pm.

December

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| Sun 6 | 8.45am Worship (HC) – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton |
| Sun 13 | 8.45am Worship – D Richardson 10.15am Worship – Rosalie Tregenza |
| Sun 20 | 8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton |
| Fri 25 | 8am Christmas Day Service – Rev G Renton |
| Sun 27 | 9.30am Worship – Rev G Renton |

January

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|--------|--|
| Sun 3 | 9.30am Worship – Rev G Renton |
| Sun 10 | 9.30am Worship – Rev G Renton/Wakefields |
| Sun 17 | 9.30am Worship – Rosalie Tregenza |
| Sun 24 | 9.30am Worship – Rev G Renton |
| Sun 31 | 9.30am Worship – Elders |

Grounds & Gardening

December/January

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|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 05-Dec-09 | 12-Dec-09 | F King, A West |
| 19-Dec-09 | 26-Dec-09 | E Smith, D Thom |
| 02-Jan-10 | 09-Jan-10 | A West, S Vicars |
| 16-Jan-10 | 23-Jan-10 | B Wilcockson, S Wilcockson |
| 30-Jan-10 | 06-Feb-10 | J Stowe, B Sharpham |