

The Link



September 2011

Thornleigh Hillcrest
Uniting Church Newsletter

Most Important?

The most important times on Sunday morning are the three minutes before, and the 30 minutes following, the worship service.

So writes Tom Bandy, a Christian leader and author in the USA, in the July/August 2011 issue of *Australian Leadership*. Bandy's comment is that the fact that a church has a great kitchen, comfortable hall, lovely sanctuary and challenging sermons are not enough to encourage newcomers/visitors to return unless there is a spontaneous greeting both at the entrance and over morning tea/coffee that encourages them to linger because of friendly conversations which show real and genuine interest in them.

I certainly agree that all of us need to be aware of the importance of being an even more welcoming congregation. But is the most important factor what happens prior to the service and in the 30 minutes following the service? What about the service itself?

When we gather on Sunday at church to worship, what are we doing? According to the Rev Ian Price of the SA UCA Synod, our worship needs 'to bring all of us before the Creator of all that is and thrust us together so that the (Holy) Spirit can do God's work among us; so we, in gratitude, can find words, thoughts and emotions to express who we are and Whom we love in a way that transforms life' (*Australian Leadership* March/April 2009). This statement might sound too idealistic if we simply 'turn up' without, in some way, preparing ourselves for the time when we try to encounter the living God.

In a discussion with a woman from another race (a Samaritan), recorded in John 4, Jesus says it doesn't matter where we worship but that we should worship 'in spirit and truth'. To quote William Barclay (*The Gospel of John Volume 1*), 'true worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part of a person, speaks to and meets with God, who is immortal and invisible'. If we don't have an encounter with God, whether in prayer (including silent prayer) singing, through the Bible reading and explanation, I'm not sure that we have truly engaged in worship. Have we, in fact, been aware of God's presence?

So what's more important - that which happens before and after the service or during the service? Both are essential: we should warmly welcome newcomers but we also need to have fellowship, find out the pastoral needs of those we see regularly, so that we can be true friends to our brothers and sisters. If our worship includes thanksgiving, seeking God's forgiveness and guidance, hearing what He is saying to us through Scripture, sermon and song, our efforts at being hospitable will be all the more effective as we seek to show our love for Christ and others.

What do you consider most important?

David Richardson

Church Family News

Remember in your prayers:

Bruce and Norma Chambers; Paul Dunlop; Joan Mathews; Grace Cairns and all the Firth family; Rosalie Tregenza's father and sister; Rev Stephen Reid and his son, Luke, both recovering from serious illness; our missionaries – the Wakefield family in PNG and Richard & Lindsey Parker in South Africa; Pastor Will and Betty Pearson and our friends in Broken Hill.

Bible Study

A four-week study series has been held during August with the theme of *Faith – Depending on God*. About 15 people regularly attended on Wednesday mornings with another smaller group meeting on Tuesday evenings.

The final four-week series for 2011 will commence on Tuesday 11/ Wednesday 12 October. Full details will be announced before the end of September.

Cancer Council Daffodil Day Sunday September 11

This will be celebrated between the two services. A box of merchandise is available to contribute by purchasing from the selection. A special after-church morning tea is being planned when an opportunity to donate will be given. For more information see Gill Mein or Rosalie Tregenza.



Seniors' Friendship Luncheon

Wednesday, September 21 at 11.30 for 12noon. at the church.
A hot roast dinner and dessert will be served at a cost of \$10 per person.

More details and invitations will be distributed soon but pop it your diary now please.

The next **HOSPITALITY LUNCH** is planned for Sunday October 30. Host homes will be required and guests too, of course! Another date for your diary.

Birthdays

September

- 1 Wojtek Zborowski
- 5 Robyn Little
- 6 Pat Hutchinson
- 9 Melissa Mottram
- 18 Clem Woodward
- 21 Fred King
- 22 Heather Davis
- 27 Michael Wakefield
- 30 Wendy Clark



Mingles

Saturday August 27 was our planned walk at Muogamurra National Park, organised by Peter Cribb.

Details of the next outing on September 24 have not been finalised. The Zborowski's are organising this event and information will be in the notices closer to the event.



Woodworking Group

The Men's Woodworking Group meets each Monday, from 9am, at Jim Stowe's home at 8 Koorungal Avenue, Thornleigh. All men are welcome to come along and help/learn to make woodcraft items for sale at the annual market day. Bring your own safety gear (ear muffs, goggles etc) and lunch. For more info, ring Jim on 9484 6064.



Cluster Group

For Cluster Group members, the activity for August was to join with the Mingles group to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Muogomarra Reserve, only open to the public for a few weeks at the beginning of spring.

In September, Cluster Group members are supporting the Sydney Welsh Choir Concert to be held on Saturday September 10 at 7.30pm in our church. It is hoped that, besides having an enjoyable evening to listen to the choir and other artists, the event will raise considerable funds to be shared with the two Christian Education programs we support in local high schools as well as our own church funds.

The planned outing to Bundeena for Saturday October 16 has been postponed and so Cluster Group members are being encouraged to attend *Man of La Mancha*, a musical drama presented by the Normanhurst UC Musical Society. Details later.

Day Fellowship

At our last meeting, 14 ladies showed their creative side making and decorating gift cards under guidance of Elizabeth Sequeira from Faithbooking. On Monday September 26, we will be traveling to Davistown for lunch. Please watch the weekly newsletter for travel arrangements.
Heather Firth



Tickets Now Available

The SYDNEY WELSH CHOIR
is to perform at Thornleigh Hillcrest Uniting
Church on Saturday September 10
at 7.30pm.

Tickets are \$15 for adults
and \$5 for children.

Part of the profits will go to the
Normanhurst-Hornsby and Pennant Hills-
Cherrybrook Christian Education Associations.



From the Wakefields

Hello to all our dear friends and family,

Well hello to all those who are not presently visiting us anyway. As I write this email we are enjoying the company of Michael's Aunty Glenda and her friend Ingrid and my mum and dad. The kids think it has been Christmas in July, I think it's better than Christmas because I don't have to do any dishes (not to mention all the female company) and Michael is enjoying having my dad to blame for the car being out of action for a few weeks while they take the head off the motor! So what have we been up to?

Michael's World:

- Ran two days of CRMF Board and AGM meetings which went well with some good results
- Helped a missionary connect up a pump in a bore she had drilled so she could supply water to her Sunday School teachers teaching school
- Looked after the kids for a week while Rachael went AWOL (More info later)
- Converted a satellite dish for MAF in Mt Hagen
- Spent a week developing Learning Technologies ideas with the MAF Asia Pacific Learning Technologies head - this is a very exciting ministry that continues to grow. It is being constructed to help remote pastors to receive good Biblical training as well as getting the Bible on audio devices to remote communities so the gospel can be heard by all. It is really exciting us and if you want to know more about this ministry please let us know.
- Attended and participated in the PNG Evangelical Alliance AGM
- Put together with others and attended the Inter missions technical conference in PNG
- And the usual round of housekeeping and fire putting out.

Family News

- Josh, Elicia and Jess have been on their two month (summer) holiday from school. They have enjoyed it but it is a long holiday on a little compound. I think we will all be a bit relieved when school goes back this week
- I had a bit of a special occasion occur recently (sorry can't tell you what because when a lady gets to a certain stage in life you can no longer mention her age!), and as a surprise, my very very special husband sent me on a trip to Cairns for a week by myself! When I arrived there, I was again surprised by the presence of my Mum and two sisters hiding in my room. I had a very enjoyable week with my family and I feel incredibly spoilt by my husband who thought of this special surprise and looked after the kids as well.
- To add to this week of spoiling a week after my return the whole family went on a two-week holiday to a large Island north of PNG (New Ireland). We had a most enjoyable time as we went with a family from the Swiss mission who had been there before, so they helped us find all the best places to snorkel,

dive and swim. It was a great holiday and we all came back much more relaxed and brown.

- A week after our return from holiday, Rach's parents arrived and now we also have our other visitors as well. We are really enjoying their company.
- I have also in between these times been enjoying spending more time at work keeping the guesthouses running and doing other little clerical jobs. Praise God I have also managed to get new passports for three of our kids, and work permits and visas for all the missionaries at CRMF.

What Next:

This week the kids go back to school.
Two short-term volunteers will be arriving

Prayer Points

- Please pray for the kids as they go back to school, Josh is a bit nervous about the workload for grade 6 and would really value your prayers
- Michael is also struggling with the amount of homework he has at the moment. Please pray he will be able to catch up with all that needs to be done at work and maybe get a bit ahead.
- Please pray for the kids as they say goodbye to Nan and Pa

Thanks for taking the time to read our long email and catching up on what we are up to.

Grace and Peace

Michael, Rachael, Josh, Elicia, Jessica and Mikaela



Hope you enjoy these few photos; this month they are of our holidays in Kavieng.



Parkers' Update

Hello wonderful people everywhere.

I (Richard) thought that I should give my beautiful pregnant wife a break from doing a lot of the newsletter and contribute most for your reading pleasure (hopefully) in this edition of the Team Parker Times. I am sure Lindsey will edit the spelling, but keep on the lookout.

Lindsey and I recently celebrated our fifth wedding anniversary and also eight years since I arrived in South Africa. We thank the Lord for all the wonderful years.

We had mentioned in a previous email that we would be probably be coming back to Australia later this year. However, with Baby Parker due to arrive in November, we have decided to delay our visit until the second half of 2012. This means that it will have been quite a long while since our last visit. You will see through this newsletter just how important your prayers and support are to us. You might wonder at times why God has put us in your heart at a certain time. Please know that it might be that exact moment when we really need your prayers and support. Thank you so much for all that you do for us. Due to the fact that you will not see us again until the middle of next year, Lindsey and I will put together a short video explaining what we have been up to and our plans for the future. If you would like to receive this video to show at your church or small group, please email us on richandlinz@vodamail.co.za.

Prayer points ...

Please pray for Richard as he begins the process to apply for permanent residency in South Africa and for both of us as we start preparing for the arrival of Baby Parker (Nov 24).

Healing for Richard's headaches and relief from nausea and fatigue for Lindsey.

Please pray for provision for the ministry and for our growing family.

Please pray for Thandi, who we have worked with for a number of years (the daughter of Mary who does the beautiful embroidery). Thandi has just started a Travel and Tourism Course and would like you to pray that she will be able to learn much and that this course will open doors for her. Thandi helps us with cleaning on Saturdays to help pay for her transport to and from college.

We urgently need someone to handle the maintenance of the property, and someone to help with finances and admin. Peter Campbell is fulfilling both roles at the moment.

In the top compound, where we live, there are a number of units, including a park home, that we would like to move. Please pray for wisdom and the right people to help with moving them. We need to sort out the top compound for future development.

Please continue to pray for the Creche teacher training. Pray for Dominica and Thembi, our local facilitators in Vosloorus and Langaville.

(Continued on page 13)

Market Day Form



On the following **two** pages we've printed the same form twice. Please fill them both in and pull them out of *The Link*. Cut them apart and put one copy in the box in the church foyer for collation by the fete committee and hang the other copy on your fridge or somewhere you can refer to it easily closer to the date.

THORNLEIGH HILLCREST U.C. MARKET DAY

Saturday, November 12, 2011

8am – 2pm

We are planning a range of stalls and activities to raise funds:

Cake/Jam/Slices; Trash and Treasure; Plants; Books; Craft;
Morning Teas; Woodwork; Tradewinds Tea & Coffee;
International Foods; Sausage Sizzle; Ice-cream & Drinks;
Kids' Whack a Rat; Trading Post; School Choir; School Band

How can **you** help?

Please tell us how you can assist to make this a very successful day. Please **colour in** as many boxes as you can.

- I will cook for the Cake/Jam/Slices stall
- I will bake scones for Morning Tea
- I can provide books for the Book stall
- I can provide items for the Craft stall
- I can provide plants for the Plant stall
- I can provide items for the Trash and Treasure stall
- I can help with transport and setting up
- I can assist with First Aid
- I can supply card table/s
- I can assist with setting up/clearing up
- I can assist with the letterbox drop
- I can assist on a stall (please specify) _____
- Other: _____

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

THANK YOU! Please place this form in the box in the foyer as soon as possible but by Sunday September 25 at the latest.

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NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

THANK YOU! Please hang this form on your fridge or somewhere you can refer to it easily.

The Way of the Cross

Expectations sometimes have a way of backfiring on us. When I was 10 years old, a new grocery store was having its grand opening and I rode my bicycle over to the store to see what was happening. I noticed when I got there that the store had a bakery section. These were “new wave” back in the 1960s. They offered pieces of pie for only a quarter and I got mine out of my pocket. I pointed out the biggest piece to the attendant behind the counter — one I assumed was cherry. She gave the pie to me and I took a big bite. I quickly made a spectacle of myself by spitting it out in front of about 50 people. It turned out not to be the cherry pie I expected, but rhubarb pie instead.

When we expect one thing and then get another, it can be a rude experience. Something like this was going on in first-century Palestine. The people expected a militant Messiah who would conquer their opponents. What they got instead with Jesus was a Messiah that took the form of Isaiah’s suffering servant. In Matthew 16:21-28, Jesus fleshes out the idea of what it means to follow him. Self-denial is at the heart of his mission and therefore, becomes vital to those who chose to be his disciples. To follow Jesus is to allow God to remake us in God’s image by divine grace. According to the New Testament, Jesus is as close to the image of God as any human being will ever see. He had the divine imprint stamped upon his person.

The Gospel of Matthew holds the Christology of Jesus and Jesus’ demands for discipleship in close tether. Those who understand who Jesus is will then live a life that befits the gospel. In this way, disciples conform to Jesus’ paradoxical understanding of discipleship. Jesus suggests that those who follow him in the way of suffering and death will in a curious way find their authentic selves. Likewise, those who seek their lives apart from his teachings will ultimately be gathering nothing but straw and chaff.

Soren Kierkegaard, as only Kierkegaard could, wrote a beautiful piece of irony in an essay titled “And I Looked Around and Nobody was Laughing.” He wrote: “I went into church and sat on the velvet pew. I watched as the sun came shining through the stained-glass windows. The minister dressed in a velvet robe opened the golden gilded Bible, marked it with a silk bookmark and said, ‘If any man will be my disciple, said Jesus, let him deny himself, take up his cross, sell what he has, give it to the poor, and follow me.’”

Most of us are not bad people, but we are too often timid and afraid. We want to be followers of Jesus, but we are unsure and apprehensive. Perhaps if we could only understand what Jesus was trying to tell his disciples, then we would be a little clearer about what he is now telling us. In



order to live fully, we are freed from all the restraints by which the world shackles us. If we could let go of our narrow understanding of what gives life meaning, then we would be free to pursue a life that cannot be taken away.

As Jesus said in Matthew 16:25, "Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

— David Neil Mosser, reprinted with permission from *The Clergy Journal*, © Logos Productions.



A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

(Parkers' Update continued from page 8)

Also pray for the development of the libraries in these areas, and that a suitable venue for a library in Slovo Park will be found soon - a local business has agreed to help with the set-up costs — praise the Lord!
All our love, Richard, Lindsey and Baby Parker

FRONTIER SERVICES – OUTBACK LINKS

Why would anyone think that taking their four children away to the middle of nowhere, to help a total stranger for three weeks could ever be a good idea? Well, we love exploring Australia as a family and we wanted the kids to experience life on an outback station, so they can truly relate to how other Australians live and work, plus it was a great chance to serve others together. The Frontier Services' Outback Links program was just for us.

Running our own business makes it difficult to get long periods of time off. We had been registered volunteers with Outback Links for a couple of years, after reading their magazine 'Frontier News' and were inspired. So finally we had three weeks over the Christmas/New Year 2010 and offered that time to Frontier Services. Initially we had a couple of placement opportunities that fell through and we were starting to wonder if God wanted us to go. Finally we had a placement near Quilpie, Qld. But alas, the week before we were to leave, we got the call that floods had blocked the roads and it was unlikely that the water would recede any time soon. Bitterly disappointed, and not sure if we should cancel the accommodation we had for the to and fro trip, we waited for another placement at such late notice, especially with the flooding across Queensland. Talk about a leap of faith, but God likes to surprise us with last-minute action, and less than 15 hours before we were due to depart, we received the call with the placement to 'Bindebango' 30kms north of Bollon, Queensland.

Full of anticipation, loaded with three weeks' groceries and gear in case we got flooded in, including a turkey for Christmas, we left for Bollon, stopping overnight at Bourke. We arrived at Bindebango the following afternoon, where we met Ernie, our placement host. He had moved out of his own house and into an old cottage, so we could stay in the house. It was a very generous gesture, the first of many from our host, who had only been given 48 hours notice of our placement and impending arrival. It didn't take us long to unpack and get settled and meet the locals - five kelpie pups, five working dogs, assorted frogs, geckoes, snakes and birdlife.

Matt soon got to work cutting, welding and constructing gates, cattle feeders and eventually he designed and constructed a cattle crush and chase. Ernie's properties had been damaged by the March 2010 floods, and on one property, he only had perimeter fencing on a 30,000 acre property and was unable to separate the cows, calves and bulls. All the steelwork that Matt made will enable Ernie to separate the cattle when the new paddock fencing and cattle yards are installed. Matt also fixed a few odds and ends that Ernie just didn't have time to do. Sarah cleaned the house by scrubbing the red dust off the walls and floors and windows, painted the cattle feeders and kept Matt and the kids fed and watered. As for our children, Jolyon 12½, Juliet 11½, Callum 9½ and Bradden 8, each day was a new adventure. They played endlessly with the five very cute puppies, swam in the pool, rode their pushbikes, rode a quad bike and dirt bike, played Monopoly and read books. Every day brought new surprises, such as where the frogs will appear

next, like on your pillow at bedtime or when you put your shoes on. Ernie, despite working long hours in the summer heat, insisted on taking us out to teach the kids how to ride a horse most evenings much to Juliet's delight.

Ernie's wife, Leigh, and their two sons live on another property outside of Roma, 400kms away, and Ernie regularly commutes between the two properties. This takes him five hours each way when it's dry, and up to six to eight hours if it's wet. Our presence meant that Ernie could go to be with them for a few days at Christmas, even though the floods prevented them from heading to the coast, for a holiday they haven't been able to have for several years. Ernie, Leigh and the boys returned for New Year and we all really enjoyed each other's company. We got to meet the Bollon locals at the Anglican church Christmas service, which was a couple of days before Christmas, and again at the pub on New Year's Eve. Everyone we talked with either knew about Frontier Services Outback Links program or had a volunteer at some time or another for various reasons. The appreciation for volunteers and the subsequent long-term connections and friendships made, was encouraging to hear. Our children got on really well with Ernie's boys too, and they even taught our lot how to crack a whip. Both families have been inspired and encouraged by each other.

We did not want to go home. We had been spoiled with spectacular views, horizons and sunsets night electrical storms, amazing wildlife, and peace and quiet, One night we just sat on the verandah, doused in mozzie repellent, eating chocolate with the lightning show almost 360 degrees around us, and never knowing where to look. According to Bradden it was, "the best night ever". Memories are made in moments like these. We had so much fun together as a family, but most of all, we know that those gates, feeders and the crush will service Ernie's farm for many years to come, Although Matt was the only one who could weld, the rest of the family helped Ernie in other ways. Bradden would often be chief gate opener and closer and would chew Ernie's ear off in the ute. It was our presence that brightened the often lonely days for Ernie. We still keep in contact with Ernie and Leigh and hope to return to Bindebango, as there is still so much to be done.

We are aware that there are so many more farmers across Australia with needs of all kinds, particularly after the floods, which like Ernie, need a hand to get back on track. Amazingly for us, the floods were all around us, but did not affect our travels and stay. We were truly blest by our opportunity to help, our time in South Central Queensland and experiencing life in the Outback.

(The Outback Links Program matches your skills and gifts with the needs, direction and time you are travelling, and send you regular updated lists of the opportunities and needs as well). <http://www.frontierservices.org/outbacklinks/index.html> *CONNEXION Magazine* thanks Matt, Sarah and family for sharing their Frontier Services Outback Links experiences. They are church members in the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery. Ed.

CONFERENCE
THE CLIMATE CRISIS
as the
CRISIS of HUMANITY
10am to 3.30pm
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2011

At UNITED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
16 MASONS DRIVE, NORTH PARRAMATTA 2151

REGISTRATIONS FROM **9am**

GUEST SPEAKERS

Ernst CONRADIE

Professor of Systematic Theology & Ethics
University of Western Cape, South Africa

Clive HAMILTON

Professor of Public Ethics
Centre for Applied Philosophy

(A joint Centre of Australian National University,
Charles Sturt University & University of Melbourne)

Costs: \$40 Waged: \$25 Unwaged

(Includes Lunch & Morning Tea)

\$10 Exclusive of Lunch

RSVP by 13 September 2011 to David Roper:

email: davidr@nsw.uca.org.au

Phone: 8838 8927

Never tire of forgiving, and so give the devil no hold. Be merciful and compassionate, spontaneously and wholeheartedly. The Lord forgives you all day long; in the silence of your heart, then, do the same, untiringly and sincerely.

Piere-Marie Delfieux.

Turkey Study Tour: April 9-27, 2012

This follows on from the highly successful tour that Rob led to Turkey in 2010. The tour focuses on Biblical sites associated with both Paul's journeys and the Book of Revelation, early church history (eg Nicaea), major Byzantine Christian and Muslim architecture and art, as well as the stunning landscape of Cappadocia. We will visit Gallipoli, but deliberately avoiding ANZAC Day.

The price is \$5,590, including flights, accommodation, all meals, all site entries, boat to Patmos, tips and local tour guide (but excluding airport taxes, visa, insurance and other personal costs).

No-obligation, no-pressure information evening: September 9, 2011 at the Centre for Ministry (16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta) – RSVP 26 August.

Deposits due October 2, 2011

To download a brochure, visit <http://nsw.uca.org.au/boe/sce/>

For more details, contact Rob McFarlane, Director, School of Continuing Education, robertm@nsw.uca.org.au or 02 8838 8935.



WEST EPPING UNITING CHURCH

Cnr Carlingford Rd and Orchard St West Epping

Extend a special invitation to all to hear our special speakers in September and October

Monday September 12 at 8pm

Rev Dr Rick Dacey

Ministry Team Leader at West Epping Uniting Church

Topic: 'I have a Dream': How a Speech Changed America

These were the famous words of Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jnr in 1963 as he delivered his prophetic sermon from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC. No speech before or since has had a more profound impact on American society. What gave this speech the power to move, inspire and engage? And how is it that even today, 50 years on, most Americans can hear the speech in their minds. Rick has done extensive analysis of the speech, 'I have a dream', as part of his doctoral thesis. He'll share with us how a nation has been transformed not only by what King said on that day, but how he said it.

Rick Dacey and family return to the USA in January 2012 after spending five years of a very special ministry here. We welcome everyone to share this evening with us.

Please come and hear this inspiring speaker.



Important Dates for 2011

Congregational meetings

September 21
December 7 AGM



Church council

November 16



Elders' gathering

October 17

Working bee

October 29



Diary Dates

- **KYB** (Know Your Bible) meets at 10.30am each Monday.
- **Ashleigh Lodge Service** is on the third Sunday of the month at 11am.
- **Kids' Time** meets at 4-6pm on Mondays in school terms.
- **Indoor Bowls** meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at 1pm.
- **Day Fellowship** normally meets on the fourth Monday of the month at 1pm, and at other times for outings.
- **Men's Woodwork group** Mon at 9am

September

Sun 4	8.45am Worship (HC) – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
Sun 11	8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
Sun 18	8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
Wed 21	<i>THE LINK DEADLINE</i>
Sun 25	8.45am Worship – tba 10.15am Worship – tba

October

Sun 2	8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
Sun 9	8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
Sun 21	8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton

Grounds & Gardening

September

10, 17	S Holmes, D Thom
21, 1 Oct.	F King, B Sharpham