

The Link



November 2009

Thornleigh Hillcrest
Uniting Church Newsletter

Sustaining Spiritual Growth

Some Thoughts from *Australian Leadership* (September/October 2009)

The most recent issue of the journal *Australian Leadership* looks at the question of establishing intentional discipling programs in churches.

In *What Comes Next? Is There Life After Growth?* Geoffrey Mitchell, a pastor from Iowa USA, defines spiritual growth as 'the intentional process of seeking God, loving people and becoming like Jesus'. His church conducts four five-week sessions on Faith, Mission, Prayer and Bible. People are hungry for God and Mitchell's church has discovered that the greatest relational gatherings develop through food and flexibility. Frequent and intentional community events create an environment for relating. But Worship is the single biggest opportunity to teach, lead and inspire spiritual growth.

Community matters, says Matt Sarre, Small Groups Pastor at Aberfoyle UC in South Australia, because the Bible is a book centred on the idea and practice of community; Jesus lived and worked with community and His followers formed a community (Acts 2: 42-47). Matt Sarre contends that small groups are the best means of 'creating spaces' in the church to allow people time and space to be real and vulnerable to each other.

At NewLife UC on the Gold Coast, where Melissa Lipsett is a pastor, everyone is urged to be part of a small group as a primary method of connecting with the church community and delivering pastoral care. Groups are encouraged to function as places of genuine love, commitment and acceptance, even more important than the quality of the Bible study. Whilst groups don't follow a set curriculum, all groups are expected to have the following elements:

- meaningful relationships, with care and support
- accountability
- prayer and engagement with the Bible.

How do we find a small group model that works? Tim Brown suggests that we need to define the purpose of small group ministry (e.g. connecting people with others, challenging people spiritually), explore different models, adopt the most appropriate one for the church, and develop a system for measuring the effectiveness of groups.

Perhaps, as part of our overall efforts to develop a new mission plan (the first planning session is on Saturday November 21), we need to include small groups ministry as part of the process.

To read these articles in their entirety, as well as several others, please contact Jim Mein to borrow this issue of *Australian Leadership* and return it to him.
David Richardson

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.

Missionary Support for 2010

Each of us, again in 2010, will have the opportunity of standing behind our missionaries, Richard & Lindsey Parker and Michael & Rachael Wakefield (and their four children), both in prayer and financially.

It is encouraging for our missionaries in South Africa and PNG to know the level of support they can expect from members of our congregation in the next year. Forms will be available in mid-November for you to indicate your intended gifts.

For the Diary

FINANCE AND PROPERTY MEETING Monday, November 2 at 7.30pm.

ELDERS' GATHERING – Monday November 9 at 7.30pm in the multipurpose hall. All elders are requested to be present for this time of sharing, mutual encouragement and prayer.

CONCERT presented by the Northern Sydney Youth Orchestra – Saturday November 21 at 7pm at our centre. Tickets available from Allan West. Cost: adults \$20, concession \$15, students \$5.

COMBINED SERVICE – Sunday November 29 at 9.30am. This service will be led by the Hosanna Korean Presbyterian Church, with the Rev Glen Renton as preacher. Our entire congregation (both 8.45am and 10.15am attendees) are encouraged to share in this special time of worship with our Korean friends. On this Sunday, there will be no 8.45am or 10.15am services.

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.

Birthdays

November

- 3 Rosalie Tregenza
- 9 Garth Cook
- 15 Merran Renton
- 18 Chu Chu
- 23 Dick Craymer
- 24 Liz Newton
- 25 Jenny Puglia
- 27 Norma Chambers
Bruce Tregenza
- 28 Brianna Thompson



Mingles



On Saturday, October 24, five of the Mingles enjoyed a relaxing stroll around parts of Mt Tomah Botanical Gardens, before sitting down to a picnic lunch together.



The end of year function will be a BBQ at the Wilcockson Woodland Gardens, closer to home at Pennant Hills, on Saturday, November 28.

Please contact Brian and Sue to confirm details and catering arrangements.

Cluster Group News

On Saturday October 17, the public transport system was well tested by a group of 13 folk from our church when we travelled from Thornleigh, through the newly opened route to Central via Epping and Chatswood. The trips on the interurban trains to and from Springwood were very pleasant and afforded the time for much conversation.

The recently rebuilt Springwood Sports Club was an attractive venue for a more than adequate lunch for us all; the day together was most enjoyable and relaxing.

Cluster Group will be attending the Concert by the Northern Sydney Youth Orchestra in our church on Saturday November 21 commencing at 7pm and will be responsible for arranging the supper.

The final Cluster Group activity for this year will be on Saturday December 5 in the multipurpose hall for a Christmas party, when we will share a BBQ with salads and desserts. It will also be the occasion for forming the committee for 2010.

Annual General Meeting of the Congregation

December 2, 2009 at 7.30pm
at the church complex

Would all committees please have their reports to Cathy Thompson by **November 15**. If sending reports by email, please include them as an attachment.

Day Fellowship

Monday, November 23 at 1pm: AGM and planning meeting for 2010

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

Friendship Group

**The planning meeting for 2010 will be held on
Wednesday, November 11 at 8pm.**

The Creation in Music

Ten of Australia's leading young composers are taking part in a unique project at St Ives Uniting Church to mark the Christmas season.

All heaven shouted for joy: Stations of Creation 2009 is a musical celebration of the mystery of being, or creation, through birth.

Ten composers have contributed work which will be performed by professional singers and musicians at recitals at the church on November 27 and 28.

The brainchild of the Reverend. Dr Doug Purnell, this year's commissioning of the musical works follows a similar project last year, which generated national interest.

"We have undertaken the music program to encourage young Australian and emerging composers to create music that will be prepared for, performed and recorded in concert," said Dr Purnell.

"In this way, we are taking a traditional story, built on the biblical tradition, and inviting the composers to reflect on the meaning of the text through their musical compositions.

Subjects for the compositions include: The Creation, The Risk of Birth, Conception, the Quickening, The Birth, The Mother's Song of Joy, the Angels Sing, and the Circle of Creation.

They will be performed in concert by four singers and four musicians, including a string quartet and vibraphone. It is also planned to record a CD of the performances.



For more information, phone 9449 6004 or 9144 5795.

Second Sunday Club

Sunday, November 8

Our speaker this month is Andy Mein, who works for Oxfam Australia and coordinates the Sydney Trailwalk each year. This is a major fundraiser for the organisation, raising over \$2 million each year.

Come along and hear about the event, and the work and organisation that goes into making it the huge success that it has become.

TRADING POST at our Market Day

We are again going to have a TRADING POST so please tell your family and friends.

To remind you how it works:

We can sell:

- Electrical appliances/ gadgets – in good working order
- Sporting equipment such as exercise bikes, surfboards, bikes, scooters, boogie boards etc
- Homewares – fine china, collectables, unwanted gifts
- Photos of large items of furniture can be displayed with a contact phone number.



We cannot sell:

- Used clothes
- Computers, monitors, printers
- Baby cots, child restraints, car seats due to safety regulations



We sell for you at 25% commission.

Maximum number of items per person is 20.

Nothing under \$5 in value.

You need to:

- Bring your items to the church already priced on Friday, November 6 between 5pm & 7pm
- Fill in the required form
- Return on Saturday by 2pm to collect your money or unsold goods.

If you have any questions please contact Gill Mein (9980 8670).

The Garbage Law

How often do you let other people's nonsense change your mood? Do you let a bad driver, rude waiter, curt boss, or an insensitive employee ruin your day? The mark of a successful person is how quickly one can get their focus back on what's important.

A friend told me the following story:

Sixteen years ago I learned this valuable lesson. I was in the back of a New York City taxi cab and we took off for Grand Central Station. We were driving in the right lane when, all of a sudden, a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. The taxi driver slammed on the brakes, skidded, and missed the other car's back end by just inches! The driver of the other car; the guy who almost caused a big accident, whipped his head around and he started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. And I mean ... he was friendly. So, I said, "Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital!" And this is when my taxi driver told me what I now call, 'The Law of the Garbage Truck.'

"Many people are like garbage trucks", he explains. "They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it. And if you let them, they'll dump it on you. When someone wants to dump on you, don't take it personally. You just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. You'll be happy you did."

It got me thinking. How often do I let garbage trucks run right over me? And how often do I take their garbage and spread it to other people: at work, at home, on the streets? It was that day I said, "I'm not going to do it any more."

Life's too short to wake up in the morning with regrets. Love the people who treat you right. Forget about the ones who don't. Believe that everything happens for a reason. Never let the garbage truck run over you ...

From Stephen Reddish, *What's in the Billy* September 09



Report on the JAAL Sausage Sizzles

It never ceases to amaze me how we find out about talents our friends have that we are unaware of when we move outside our comfort zones. The free sausage sizzles supporting the 'Jesus – All About Life' campaign at Thornleigh railway station were a classic example. On both the days we were there, 12 of our members helped with cooking, assembling the sausage sandwiches, handing them out, offering sauce, and of course, handing out JAAL pamphlets. It was in performing some of these tasks that these hidden talents emerged! On both days, the talent of those handing out the food was amazing.

On the first day, Ann Zborowski was most ingenious – even serving train guards on northbound trains! Meanwhile, Debbie Richards was at her persuasive best. (I'm sure no-one expected it to be so difficult to **give away** sausage sandwiches.) On day two, Rosalie Tregenza distinguished herself by serving people on The Esplanade! But the champion server on day two was undoubtedly Varun Mathew, who helped out until he had to leave for school. I'm sure it was his disarming smile that proved impossible to resist. The sauce servers were led by Peter Busch on day one and by Brian Wilcockson on day two – one wonders where they learned their 'trade'? Undoubtedly the champion pamphlet distributor was Allan West, who served on both days, ably supported by Vivienne Parsons and John Vicars.

May I hasten to say many others toiled at various tasks on both days and the success of the project is due to a great team effort. The consensus seemed to be that we should do this again – to be seen as the church in the community.

David Firth

Stand Up Against Poverty

On October 18, 64 of us at the two services took part in the worldwide Stand Up.

We contributed to the 173,045,325 citizens at over 3,000 events in 120 countries. This has been certified by the Guinness World Records as the largest mobilisation of human beings in recorded history, an increase of 57 million over last year. This is an emphatic demand to governments to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

Are You Interested in our Future?

What is our Next Mission to 2015?

A Rabbi once opined: 'Don't let the past veto the future'.

Our congregation's future directions will be the subject of a series of Saturday sessions under the facilitation of our Synod's New Congregation's Mission Consultant, Glen Powell.

Please book the dates in your diaries now as all members of our congregation are needed:

November 21, 2009

January 23, 2010-

February 13, 2010

March 6, 2010

The sessions will run from 10am to 5pm. All are Saturdays.

Topics discussed will include:

Recalibrating the worship service to be newcomer-ready.

Reorienting and relaunching congregational activities to be outsider-friendly.

Ensuring the Church Council represents the mission of the whole church.

Starting new-user friendly groups or welcoming programs for newcomers.

Participating in the community as a community organisation, not just a church.

Please participate in defining our future directions.

Jim Mein, Chair of the Church Council and Congregation

Friends of Mawarra

MAWARRA NEWS At the September meeting of the Friends of Mawarra (F of M) the following matters were raised:

- The 3 founding congregations have agreed to the constitution of F of M.
 - The Mawarra Christmas dinner will be held at the West Pennant Hills Sports Club.
 - Allan Bellamy from Pennant Hills would continue to run off *Musings* (Mawarra's monthly news sheet). This is needed as while Mawarra's copier is fine for small runs, it doesn't handle the larger runs for the news sheet.
 - Skylights have been installed in the recreation room as a first step to refurbishing this area.
 - The new sunshades on the patio outside the community hall, installed by the residents' committee, received favourable comment.
- Since the previous meeting, transport had been provided on nine occasions for residents by F of M.

Are YOU an Office Bearer for 2010?

We are appealing for members of God's congregation at Thornleigh Hillcrest Uniting Church:

**TO STEP FORWARD IN FAITH
AND BE CHALLENGED TO BE AN OFFICE BEARER
in our congregation and the Church Council.**

Annually, we appoint a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and a Treasurer. Fortunately Steve Williamson has accepted the role of Treasurer so we are looking for a Chair, Deputy Chair and a Secretary.

Cathy Thompson has submitted her resignation as Secretary at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, December 2, 2009, due to the pressure of studies and desiring to spend more time with her family. She has done a fabulous job and set up systems to make it easier for a successor including a Minute Secretary, a task which Jan Williamson has done so well.

The role of Secretary is mainly organising meeting notices, agenda and supporting papers, the receipt and sending out of correspondence on behalf of our congregation, organising elections and like administrative tasks.

I do not like people 'dobbing in mates' but surely it is not doing that if you know someone who could accept this vital role. Surely it is not 'dobbing', but rather recognising their gift or potential to do administration in our church. Just like the leadership strengths course many of us did in February with Sue Kaldor and Ben Weir, or being a leader as exhorted by the *Australian Leadership* reports of the Richardsons which appear in this *Link*.

Please tell me who you think is gifted to be the Chair, the Deputy and/or Secretary.

IT COULD EVEN BE YOU!

Jim Mein, current Chairperson

Hebrews 10:23-25a

Let's stick to our hope and not dither. God always keeps a promise. Let's help one another to new ways of loving and new ways of doing good. Don't be loners, like some. Keep in touch. We need one another.

From *Good as New: a Radical Retelling of the Scriptures*

From the Wakefields

Dear Friends,

We're glad we've got such a great team of faithful praying people ready to support us in this ministry we have been called to, thank you. As always, we have been managing to keep ourselves busy but not necessarily out of trouble!

Firstly we want to let you know that Josh is doing very well now. We are so grateful for all your prayers and well wishes for Josh. We are sure it was your prayers that brought him through such a serious illness and knowing that you were all praying for him also gave him encouragement and strength. Josh will be having an X-ray before we go home on furlough to see if there has been any scarring on his lungs. Thanks again for your support.

Unfortunately we feel like we had just enough time to recover from this stressful time and then we were hit by another. Unfortunately Michael had to ask one of our long term staff members to leave CRMF due to some serious dishonesty. It was a heartbreaking time for us and all the staff at CRMF and it has caused us to become very circumspect toward this culture we live in, which is not a good thing. A few days after this, the father of one of our workers died. This was a sad time for us also as this man was a very Godly man who we knew and cared for. There have been other incidences that have occurred at work that have put us a little on edge also. But we are as always managing to keep our heads above water, thanks to your prayers and support and the Lord's graciousness to us.

On the brighter side of things, we are pretty busy at the moment as we work towards getting a clearer vision for CRMF. This involves many things including customer and staff surveys and a discussion weekend with our staff and management committee. This is to assist us with the process of amalgamating with MAF International, which will all hopefully come together before the end of the year when we will be going home on furlough.

So that is what is keeping Michael and even Rachael (who is managing to get in to work a little bit nowadays) busy. The kids have just enjoyed a three-week school holiday (yep holidays again) and all are well and growing fast.



Things to pray for:

- A non-eventful time at work and home for a few months
- That we will be able to prioritise all we have to do in the next few months, get everything done and still be sane by the time we go home on furlough
- For the Lord's clear, lightning bolt-type leading for the vision process for CRMF
- That the children will continue to be happy with their life here in PNG and not be thinking too much about furlough and catching up with family and friends back home
- Words and the Spirit's leading as Michael prepares and preaches on the 1st of November.

As always, thank you so much for reading our email or newsletter and for your prayers and support – it all helps us make it through the good and bad times.

Our photos this time are of Michael at the Goroka show, Michael on Mt Wilhelm and the kids relaxing at a Swiss mission school.

Grace and Peace



Important Dates for 2009/10

Elders' meeting

November 9

Church council

Wednesday November 18

Congregational meeting

Wednesday December 2, 7.30pm

Working bee

January 29, 2010

Operation Christmas Child

A big THANK YOU to all who have supported the Samaritan Purse 2009 Operation Christmas Child project.

The Hosean Presbyterian group supported our efforts this year by completing 22 boxes of various gifts. So together we have collected approximately 100 boxes, which will be forwarded to places like Samoa, Thailand and similar countries where the children are learning the meaning of Christmas through the generosity of many people throughout the world.

The boxes were dedicated at our services on Sunday, October 25 and were collected and delivered to the Samaritan Purse warehouse at Meadowbank on Tuesday 27th. With the boxes, a cheque for \$194.05 was forwarded to assist with the freight and other associated costs.

Having seen the DVD earlier in the year showing the excited expectations on the faces of the young children, we can now imagine their reactions wherever our boxes go.

Many thanks,
Brenda Geary

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.

November

- Sun 1 8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton
 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
- Sun 8 8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton
 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
- Sun 15 8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton /Dean Kearney
 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton /Dean Kearney
- Sun 22 8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton
 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
- Wed 25 *The Link* DEADLINE for December/January issue
- Sun 29 **9.30am** Worship – Rev G Renton/ Hosanna

December

- Sun 6 8.45am Worship (HC) – Rev G Renton
 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton
- Sun 13 8.45am Worship – Rev G Renton
 10.15am Worship – Rev G Renton

Grounds & Gardening

November

- 7 & 14 R Newton
21 & 28 S Holmes, S Wilcockson