

Book of the Month

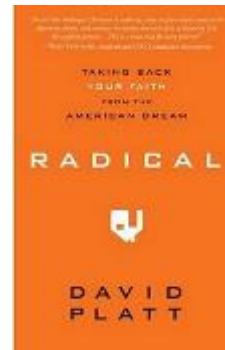
Radical —David Platt

In Radical, David Platt challenges Christians to take a hard look at their faith and ask whether they were truly following Christ or pursuing a life of comfort and material wealth as dictated by the American dream. Of course our Australian pleasure-seeking dream isn't far removed from the American.

Platt concludes his book by throwing out 5 challenges as an experiment for 12 months. I cannot commend this book highly enough.

Steve Abbott

Cost: \$ 14.95



St Matt's Services

Sunday 8am	Morning Prayer / Holy Communion
Sunday 9am	St Matts @ School; WPH Public School
Sunday 10am	Family Service for all Generations
Sunday 9.45am	Chinese Service; Cherrybrook Public School
Sunday 11.15am	Asian Congregation; Cherrybrook Public School
Sunday 5pm	Contemporary Service
Sunday 7pm	Contemporary Service
Wednesday 10.30am	Traditional Anglican Service

Ministers - All members of the Congregation

Minister	Steve Abbott	Mobile 0417 410 596	9479 3700
Assistants	Shane Dirks	Associate Minister	9479 3700
	Nerida Pearn	Young Adults	9479 3702
	Chris Jones	Youth Minister	9479 3710
	Karen Braga	Pastoral Care/Young Women	0401 933 264
	Kenneth Leung	Chinese Minister	0433 766 211
	Kenny Liew	Minister of Asian Congregation	0448 515 408
	Jacki Hellstrom	Children's Ministry Co-ordinator Tues & Fri	9479 3700
	Tina Piccione	Communications Co-ordinator Thurs	9479 3700
Administrator	Kat Butler	Monday-Friday, 9am - 5pm	9479 3700

St Matthews Anglican Church

T: 02 9479 3700 F: 02 9479 3777

E: office@stmatts.org.au www.stmatts.org.au



Your monthly update on what
Matters at St Matt's.
Reflecting the generosity
of Christ in and to our community.

December
2011/
January
2012



Wishing you a
Holy Christmas and
peaceful and refreshing
holiday season.



From all the Ministry team @ St Matt's



See inside this edition for Christmas Service times and the January 2012 preaching calendar.

If you are feeling new to St Matthews, please fill out a Communication Card found in the church or hall or at the back of the school hall. One of our ministry team will be in contact with you soon. Stay for morning tea/supper after the service to meet others who have made St Matt's their spiritual home.



www.stmatts.org.au

Senior Minister's December 2011/January 2012 Pastoral Letter

Dear sisters and brothers,

Sue and I want to thank all those who so faithfully prayed for us during our recent Long Service Leave. We had a spectacular time with a good balance of rest, recreation, reading, reflection, ministry and spiritual input. I also want to put on public record my thanks to Shane Dirks (locum), Bill France and the rest of the staff who clearly did a sterling job while we were away. It brought us both great joy to see things just continuing without missing a beat and we were filled with thanksgiving for the magnificent generosity shown towards the gift appeal for the roof replacement.

Of course, ministry goes on and we now rush headlong into the Christmas Season and all the wonderful opportunities it affords for outreach to our community.

Therefore, we'll soon be asking you to once again distribute our Christmas Postcards and advertising for the special Festival and Carols Night at West Pennant Hills Public School on Friday 16 December. The postcard this year focuses on the theme '***HOPE from God***'. As we enter the church season called Advent (Coming) I thought I would share some challenging and encouraging thoughts on the theme of HOPE recently sent to me from my US mentor, Leighton Ford. I trust you will find them as edifying as I did:

"Sometimes all you can do is hold hope for someone, until they can take it and hold it for themselves." A young colleague made this remark as we spoke over lunch about hope. The phrase struck home to me – "**hope-holders**" - isn't that what followers of Christ are supposed to be?

I think of Peter's admonition: "*Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you*" (1 Peter 3:15). I picture Paul, sailing to Rome when the ship is caught in a violent storm and near foundering. After every possible measure is taken, and the storm still rages, Luke records "*all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.*" Then Paul stands up, and tells them not a life would be lost, for an angel had come telling him not to fear, that he would indeed live to stand before the emperor. "*So keep up your courage,*" he says, "*for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we will have to run aground on some island*" (Acts 27:20-26). Paul was no preacher of positive thinking, or a prosperity gospel. Danger and death would still come. But, with his trust in the word of God, he was a true hope-holder.

And what more could we hope to be as people of hope this Advent?

What then is hope? And what difference does hope make in how we live?

- *Hope is a strong and confident trust*, given by the Holy Spirit and nurtured in life experience, that God, who has promised good to us and all creation, makes good on his promises through Jesus' coming and coming again.
- *Hope deepens our longings* – turning our wishes into a desire for what is truly good, beautiful, and eternal.
- *Hope trusts our longings into God's merciful hands*, knowing that he is wiser than we, and able to do above what we can ask or even think.
- *Hope expands our horizons* setting our desires into a wider and longer picture. Like stone masons fitting stones for a cathedral, we see only the small section assigned to us, yet know ours is part of a great purpose.
- *Hope reframes our losses.* "Reframe," a psychological term, describes the power of hope to give a new perspective, and open new possibilities. As we "hold hope" for others we pray they may also be given grace to see how God can bring gain out of terrible loss.
- *Hope binds our own future to that of Jesus Christ.* Whatever storms come we can know with comforting certainty "*that I, body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but long belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.*" (*Heidelberg Catechism*).

Of course the Christmas message is about God coming amongst us in order to restore sinful humanity into fellowship with our Creator. It is truly a message of 'Hope from God'. Hope of forgiveness. Hope of reconciliation. Hope of eternity. What a wonderful message of HOPE Christmas is, and it's one worthy of also carrying into the New Year.

Sue and I want to wish all the St Matt's family a very holy and special Christmas in which the message of HOPE sinks deeply into our spiritual DNA so that we dynamically, and yet naturally, speak of our eternal relationship with God in Christ. We also trust that the New Year will bring much blessing and joy to you and all your family. If you are travelling over the Christmas and New Year holiday season please drive carefully and we'll look forward to seeing you on your return.

In fellowship,

Steve Abbott

PS: I have written a separate article later in this Christmas/New Year edition of Matt's Monthly extending appropriate farewells and welcomes to various departing and arriving staff as well as providing some information about an exciting plan for the start of the 2012 Ministry year in February.

Steve's Prayer Points

- ◆ Thank God for His wonderful provision of both John Phua as our new Associate Minister and Geoff Everett as our new Youth Minister. John (and his family) and Geoff will commence ministry in the second half of January (John 22nd and Geoff on the 15th) . Please pray for them as they wind up their current ministries and transition into St Matt's family and ministries.
- ◆ Please keep praying that our regular Sunday collections will be adequate to meet our budget, and exceed budget, so that we can continue to expand our ministry to our local community and beyond.
- ◆ Pray for all the staff as they plan and prepare events and Christmas messages for the many outreach opportunities that will take place this summer. Steve will deliver the message for the Festival/Carols event on Friday 16 December at WPH Public School. Pray for a creative, clear and concise message, which will communicate the gospel in a courageous and winsome way.
- ◆ Pray for excellent and effective use of the quieter month of January for planning and preparation for the 2012 ministry year.
- ◆ Steve will have one week's annual leave in the New Year, affording opportunity to spend some time with children and old Christian friends. Pray that both Sue and I will commend Jesus to all we spend time with.
- ◆ Pray that Sue and I will be extremely helpful and encouraging to our new staff as they arrive and begin their ministry at St Matt's. Pray that we'll quickly become an efficient and cohesive team.



Leighton Group 2011

December 2011 Preaching Calendar

4 Dec	Using Our Gifts to Grow a Great Body	Ephesians 4:7-16
11 Dec	Using Our Wealth to Gain Friends in High Places	Luke 16:1-15
18 Dec	Lessons & Commentary/Pageant	Various
24 Dec	The Birth of God?	Matthew 1:18-25
25 Dec	Who Are the Wise Men Today?	Matthew 2:1-18

January 2012 Preaching Calendar

1 Jan	The Apple of the LORD's Eye	Psalm 17
8 Jan	Praise for the LORD My Rock	Psalm 18
15 Jan	Praise for God's Instruments of Revelation	Psalm 19
22 Jan	Prayer in War and Peace	Psalm 20-21
29 Jan	St Matt's State of the Church Message 2012: "Salt & Light Shakers"	Matthew 5:13-16

CALLING ALL CHILDREN WHO CAN PLAY AN INSTRUMENT



It's Christmas time and we need YOU for our Children's orchestra to play at our Christmas eve Matts4Kids service.

All ages and stages catered for!

This will involve coming to 2 or 3 practices beforehand

St Matt's Diary and Notes



SECOND SUNDAY POTLUCK LUNCH

11 December 2011 & 8 January 2012

12.30—2.30pm:

If you usually eat alone on a Sunday and wish to join with others for lunch and fellowship, you are invited to our 'Second Sunday Potluck Lunch' in NewLine Cottage. Tea and coffee will be supplied and it would be appreciated if you could bring finger food to share.

Further details:

Pattie Mutton (9484 0174) or

Pat Gould (9868 4630).

USE OF FANS DURING SERVICES

Recently parishioners have expressed different opinions about how the fans should operate during services at St Matt's. The matter was discussed at the November meeting of the Parish Council. Council affirmed the need for there to be adequate circulation of air.

This can only partly be achieved by opening windows. In the warmer months, therefore, the fans throughout the church will normally be switched to the '1' setting. It will then be up to the service leader, rather than individual members of the congregation, to decide whether there is a need to turn the fans up or off.

Traditional Lessons & Carols Service

with the St. Matthew's Singers

Thursday 15th December

7.30pm followed by supper.



MINISTRY TEAM FAREWELL

DATES TO DIARISE

Sunday 11 Dec after 7pm service,
special farewell supper for CJ and Claire.

Sunday 18 Dec after 10am Pageant service, farewell lunch for Shane and Rachel and the kids.

Anyone who would like to contribute to a farewell gift can do so by placing it in the offertory in a marked envelope or else give it in to the office.

Stand4Families

Pray for the ALP conference being held on 2-4 December as they discuss same-sex marriage.

Please pray they decide not to support a change in the definition of marriage.

If you would like to attend, there will be a rally on Saturday 3rd December in Martin Place at 10am to support this view.

“BAG THE ROOF”

Hand made bags are for sale in the foyer, after the morning services.

All proceeds made on bags will be donated to the “Fix the Roof” appeal.

Win Leembruggen has kindly made these bags and will be selling them. Please call

Win if you need more information.

9680 7495

THANK YOU

As 2011 comes racing to an end I want to say a huge thank you to everyone at St Matt's who has contributed in a myriad of ways, both large and small, to make the ministry here effective. I won't even attempt to list the names of people, not only for fear of leaving off a name but simply because the list would be too long. Needless to say I'm incredibly privileged to be the Senior Minister of a church where so many of its members take seriously the exercising of their gifts and willingly serve to make sure the things that need to be done are done. So to those who minister administratively, organizationally, in hospitality, in ministries of the word from Scripture to Sunday preaching, in generosity, in making our 8 weekly services function, and in so many other and varied ways I want to say I praise and thank God for your significant contributions.

I want to say to all of us that our staff, wardens and parish council, who exercise specific leadership responsibilities on behalf of our church, have served us extremely well over the past twelve months. We ought to be grateful to God for their ministries on our behalf. It is with a great deal of sadness that we will say goodbye over the coming weeks to Shane and Rachel Dirks, Chris (aka CJ) and Claire Jones and Kenneth and Amy Leung as they move on to other ministries.

Kenneth and Amy Leung are stepping down from ministry early in the New Year for a season due to health and family issues . They have served the Chinese Ministry with great love, compassion and diligence, overseeing the work during a time of transition to Cherrybrook Public School and the ministry has grown substantially over the years he has served. He has been a warm, supportive, loyal and prayerful colleague, who combines both a pastor's and evangelist's heart. The Chinese congregation is arranging a special farewell for him.

Shane and Rachel, along with Levi, Mia and Riley, may have only been with us 19 months but their contribution has been significant and impactful in so many ways, not least the introduction of our Festival and Carols Event at West Pennant Hills School in 2010. Shane has been a most loyal associate and stepped up to the locum role while I was recently on long service leave and did a wonderful job. In addition, his preaching has been challenging, creative and engaging and he has been a great supervisor and supporter of Jacki Hellstrom our children's minister. Rachel has served alongside, employing her own unique gifts with energy and enthusiasm. They are a wonderful team and we wish them every blessing as they move to St Paul's Castle Hill in the New Year to a senior role overseeing the ministry to 3-23 year olds. We'll have an official farewell lunch for them on 18 December immediately after the Pageant Service at St Matt's. I hope you will come along for this special event.

Chris and Claire Jones have been around St Matt's for a lot longer than myself and have readily served the life of our church with special focus on our Youth Ministry. CJ, as an unpaid minister and more recently as a paid member of staff, the youth of our church and wider community, with great energy, enthusiasm and care . He has an eye for detail and has ensured that the Youth ministry has been biblically solid and organisationally strong. He has also preached with careful detail to the text and appropriate application. Claire in this past year added to her ministry quiver the role of Church Warden, bringing her lawyer mind and skills to the task. We are very grateful for the expertise she has brought to the Warden and Parish Council Team and she will be sorely missed. CJ will conclude his ministry on 16 December and will be taking up the position of Youth Minister at Normanhurst Anglican Church in the New Year. We wish him and Claire abundant blessings as they step into this new and challenging ministry together. There will be a farewell supper for CJ and Claire after the Sunday Evening Service on 11 December I hope you will make the effort to join us for this special time.

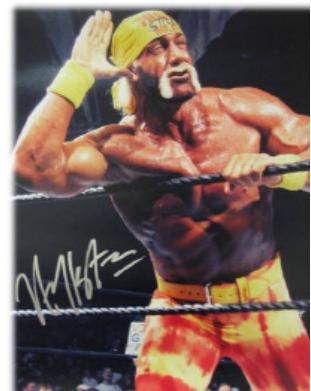
So we say a huge THANK YOU to these three members of staff and to everyone else who has served St Matt's in 2011. On the other hand we open our arms to warmly welcome three new members of staff. Jon, Lika (pronounced Leeka) and Joanna Phua (pronounced fwa) as our new Senior Associate Minister, who joins us from St Thomas' North Sydney on 22 January. Ken and Winnie Wong with their two boys, Jonathan and Jeremy, will join us in early January as our new Chinese Minister. Ken has been currently serving part time at Chatswood Anglican Church while studying at Moore Theological College (MTC) and hopes to be ordained as a Deacon on 4 February. Finally, but by no means least, we are very glad to announce that Geoffrey (Geoff) Everett will join our staff as the new Youth Minister on 15 January. Geoff has a four-year theology degree from MTC and has for the last five years been the Christian Education teacher for the Hurstville District Christian Education Board. Interestingly Jon and Geoff were both in Shane's year at MTC and I believe this will assist greatly in their orientation and settling into St Matt's. In the next Matt's Matters we'll be profiling each new staff member so you can get to know them better.

Please be praying for all of these ministers and their families as they complete one ministry and transition into a new one.

Men@StMatts

A fantastic year for the Men of St Matt's officially came to a close last Saturday morning with an encouraging and insightful breakfast. We were again treated to a spectacular spread put on by one of the men's bible study groups - the prominence of fruit and cereal celebrated by our guest speaker and medical professional Michael Vesey. Throughout the morning Michael challenged our, sometimes, casual thinking when it comes to men's physical and mental health issues and I'm sure many left with a call to the local GP as a sincere priority.

Being our last formal event for the year I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to and been a part of the Men's ministry and we look forward to strengthening relationships and maintaining Godly growth in 2012. A great way to start this will be the annual Men's Convention at Katoomba for which we are looking at the weekend of March 3rd. So please consider this weekend as a great few days of teaching and fellowship. Finally if you have any feedback for the Men@St Matt's team or would like to get involved please get in contact with Ian Wall or the church office.



St Matthews Asian Congregation **Please pray for them during the Summer programme.**



Still to come

Friday Arvo Bible Study (Senior High)
Starts 9 December 2011 @ 4pm on Fridays
See Kenny Liew

Summer Bible Fellowship
Starts 14 December 2011 @ 7:30pm on Wednesdays
See Kenneth Chan

XFX (Junior High)
Starts January 2012 @ 9.30am on Sundays
See William Lau

Young Adults Retreat @ Brooklyn
30 November - 2 December 2011
See Danny Jang

Sports Day
18 December 2012 (After service)
See Jie Yeo

Carols at Carlingford Village
11am - 1pm Saturday December 10 2011
Carlingford Village

Meet Fresh Church
Starts 8 January

Hong Kong SMAC
Meeting @ Level 4 Langham Place
Mongkok, Hong Kong
See Jacky Wong

SMAC Camp
20 - 22 April 2012

St Matthews Asian Congregation

Pray for those with special needs:

Jan , Damon , Es @ Laurie ,
Margaret , Dudley ,
Brian , Caroline (Betty daughter),
Betty , Jeannine ,
Peter ; Margaret , Jane , Cliff ,
Geoff & Margaret , Stan , Bev ,
Janet , mother of Sally .





Arvo Club News

Arvo club has been going brilliantly, with us reaching many families in the community. This year we have probably encountered 50 new families who otherwise would not have any connection with St Matt's. Into 2012 we hope to increase our regular numbers. In term 4 we have started a preschool group of children who were able to do all the crafts and join in with the singing, games and gospel lessons.

In 2012 we will be beginning the year with a series on people Jesus met – like Zacchaeus, John the Baptist, the centurion, Pilate. We will be having a circus theme.

Kids church – in 2012 we will be teaching the kids in line with the sermon series. This will give a 'whole family' teaching approach which will be great.

SRE and Arvo club will finish on 9 Dec. Kids church programs will run one more Sunday and then we have the combined pageant on 18 Dec. During January we will be running a kids program at 10am and 5pm. We will need loads of extra helpers. If you are Safe Ministry trained and are available to help on one of the Sundays in January please send me an e mail, or I may be ringing you to assist.

If you are interested in getting your Safe Ministry Certificate soon, I will be running the adult course during January as well as the junior course for those 15 and under. Watch out for advertising for these training sessions.

Thank you to all my leaders for a terrific 2011. Looking forward to a big 2012.

Jacki

St Matt's TEAR Useful Gifts 2011

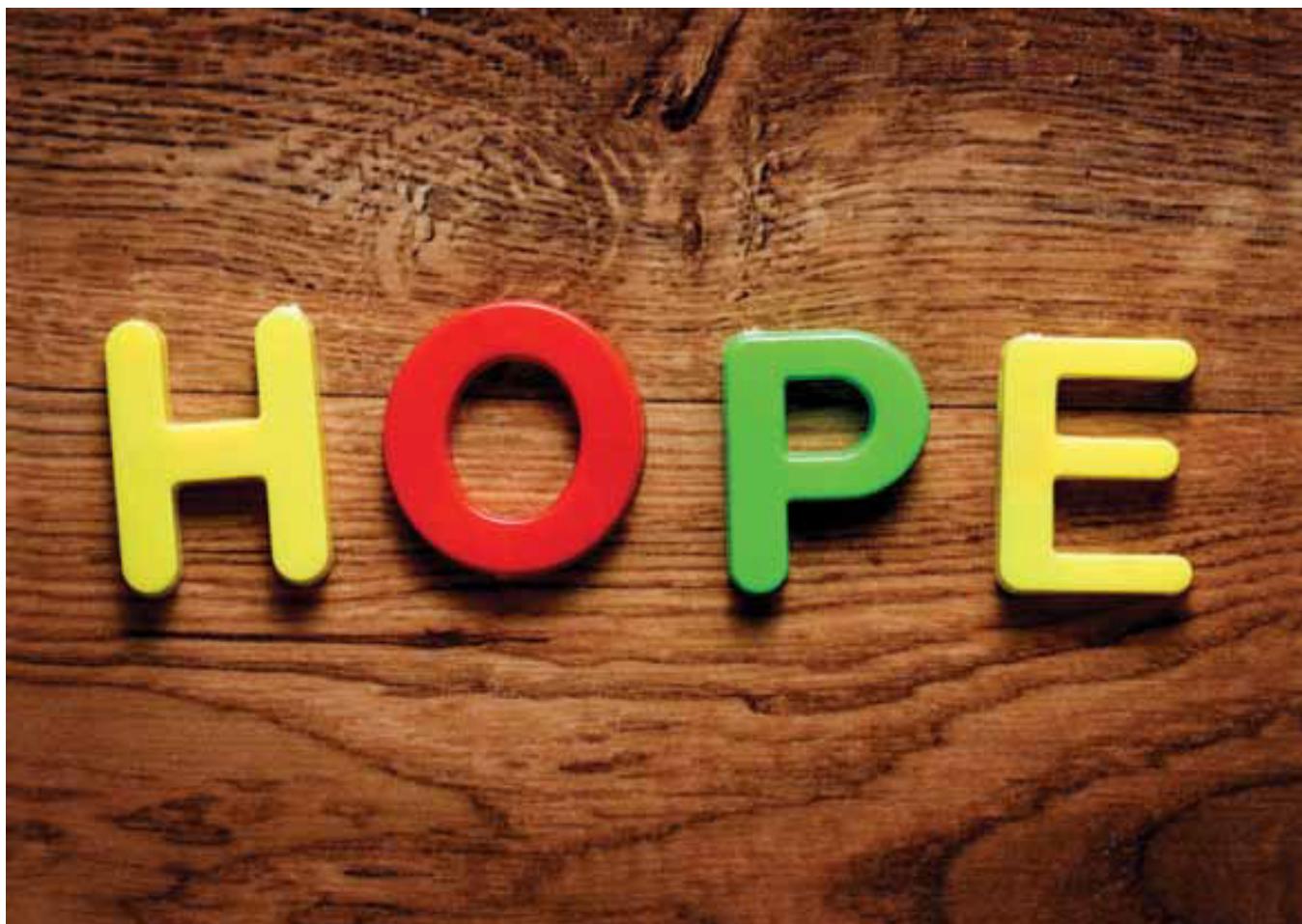


THIS CHRISTMAS why not spend your money on something that really counts!! Instead of giving gifts that your auntie or your boss don't really need, give them a TEAR useful gift card. All funds raised through the Useful Gifts Catalogue go towards the work of TEAR Australia, helping enable Christians all around the world to respond to the needs and voice of the poorest of the poor. At a time when we can celebrate the gift of God that we all really need, this is one practical way to reflect what Christmas really means to all those in our lives.

The cards will be **available after church on the 4th, 11th and 18th of December, or online at <http://www.usefulgifts.org/>.** Peter & Jane Ryan + James Waugh, 0414 723 351.

St Matt's Christmas Services and Postcard invites

The Christmas postcards, advertising all our services, have been printed and are ready for distribution on the 11 December. Please take your pile and pop them into letter boxes and give to friends and family.



FROM GOD

<u>Thursday 15th Dec</u>	Traditional Lessons & Carols 7:30pm @ St Matts
<u>Friday 16th Dec</u>	Family Festival 5:30pm @ WPH School Carols 7:30pm @ WPH School
<u>Sunday 18th Dec</u>	Pageant 10am @ St Matts
<u>Saturday 24th Dec</u>	Christmas Eve Services 5pm Matts4kids service, 7pm Traditional prayer book service (Holy Communion) 9pm & 11pm Contemporary Service. All @ St Matts
<u>Sunday 25th Dec</u>	Christmas Day services 9am & 10am Holy Communion @ St Matts

ASIAN CONGREGATION:

<u>Sunday 25th Dec</u>	Christmas Day service 11:15am @ Cherrybrook Public School
------------------------	---

中文堂:

十二月十一日 星期六 聖誕報佳音 Carlingford Village 上午11:00 至下午 2:00

十二月二十五日 星期日 聖誕節禮拜 Cherrybrook Public School
(131 New Line Rd) 上午 9:45

For enquiries please phone: 9479 3700 or email: office@stmatts.org.au

ST MATTHEWS ANGLICAN CHURCH, West Pennant Hills, Cnr New Line & Castle Hill Roads.



Toys 'n' Tucker

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Toys 'n Tucker this year—the Christmas tree is looking so full already. You still have until the 14 Dec to drop your contributions into the church:

- ◆ Gifts for children and teens:
- ◆ Christmas food for festive meals:
- ◆ 'Cash for Essentials' Cards so those we help can choose the fresh food they would like for a special Christmas



We have had a really enjoyable year at Matts4Minis in 2011. A big thank you to all the leaders, helpers and mums who have made this possible.

Matts4Minis will be starting back the first week of Term 1, Tues 31 Jan and Wed 1 Feb. We will continue to run a Tuesday and Wednesday group in 2012. These groups have been quite full throughout 2011 and we are expecting about 80% of families to return in 2012. If you or a friend would like a place at Matts4Minis 2012 please contact the church office and leave your details to put your name on the waiting list.

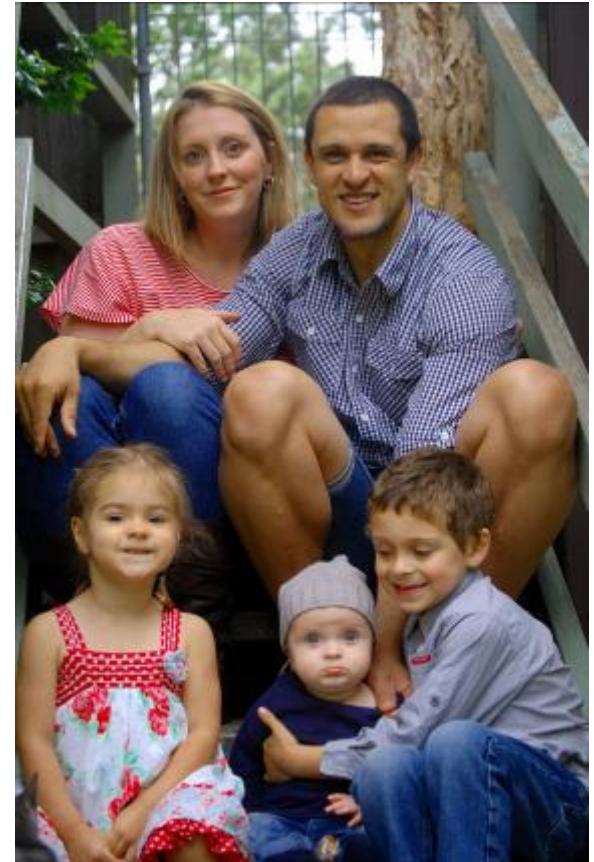
We are also currently looking for some kitchen helpers for Tuesday next year, if you can spare some time from 10-11.30am on a Tuesday morning, helping to cut up fruit and serve tea and coffee, please contact Kathy Romanis or the Church office.

Farewell from

the

Dirks family.

As you know, the end of this year will see the conclusion of our family's time and ministry in the parish of St Matt's. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your gracious support over this period. I am never good at this sort of thing, so I will use our parish's 7 core values as a reflection point, as these, along with the vision of 'Reflecting the generosity of Christ in and to our community' were the very things that attracted me to join the parish.



Unrelenting commitment to prayer.

I will always remember St Matt's as the place where I met some substantial prayer warriors. Second to none is the Senior Minister Steve Abbott. He prays a lot! We will all do well to imitate. Thanks to those who prayed and continue to pray for my family and ministry.

Undying devotion to the word of God.

It has been a privilege for both Rachel and me to have been able to teach God's word here at St Matt's. Rachel with Matts4Kids, and myself in various places. I would like to say a big thank you to those who have been so encouraging of my preaching. You may not realise but the person who benefits most from my preaching is me; it's kind of how I learn. Thanks for indulging me!

Unreserved commitment to love people impartially

It is easy for a church to become a bomb shelter. A place where the Christians show great care and amazing love for one another, as they hide away from the world that is subject to decay. My prayer for all of us is that this won't be us; that we will love people impartially. Let's work hard to keep at the front of our minds, and readily in our actions, those who are not among us, and love them like Jesus did.

Unquenched heart for evangelism

A highlight of my time at St Matt's was the month of Evangelism in 2010. We were visited by Stephen Lungu, a man whose testimony is about going from bomber to believer. Stephen in his talks and in his book, "From out of the Black Shadows" shares the story of being unable to keep the gospel in; he needs to tell everyone about the hope he has in Jesus. I pray for St Matt's and for myself that we too will be unquenched in this. It so easy to have 'gospel fever' reasoned out of you.

Unfading resolve to mature as Christians

As I write I am preparing to speak this weekend on Ephesians 4:7-16. The passage tells us to keep at it, to work together using the Gifts Christ has entrusted to us that we might reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature. Whenever people move on in churches little holes tend to open, this is opportunity! I pray that today God might awaken someone to have a go and to exercise a gift that has perhaps been lying dormant in them.

Unfailing commitment to work together as a team

I have been blessed to work on some pretty great teams while I have been at St Matt's. A big special thanks to the ministry staff team, the original core team of StMatts@school, StMatt's@School congregational life leaders (you helped me finish strong), the men's ministry team (thanks for trusting me when I did not know the details), the 5pm music team (I will miss playing with you guys), and of course the mega Carols by Candlelight teams.

Untiring determination to train, send and support servants of God

Thanks to St Matt's and all who it cost something, for giving me space to learn and train. During my time at St Matt's I completed half of my M.A (Theol.) degree which I will finish next year. More costly thanks to those who paid the cost as I learnt how to be a better leader; your patience will be of benefit to others down the track.

Thanks to those who gave financially to house, feed, and clothe my family.

We came to St. Matts to be challenged by the bold vision, "To reflect the generosity of Christ in and to our community". The vision is bold enough that we will continue to be challenged by it, wherever it is we serve. We pray you will too.

WARDENS' UPDATE.....

2011 - A year for which we have much to thank God

There is a real difficulty in preparing an update at the end of November, none of the final financial information is available, work is in progress on the preparation of the 2012 budget but nothing is yet finalized.

It is however, worth casting our minds back to the beginning of 2011 when the wardens presented the congregations with a difficult, unbalanced budget.

You may remember how we tried to explain the need to find \$60,000 in cost savings just to balance the budget. I also recall the difficulty of highlighting the fact that our offerings were not sufficient to cover the costs of essential services and stipends. In short there was a direct plea that we all needed to be more generous and regular with our monetary gifts.

The result: a year with strict control over expenses, some unexpected short term savings in stipends, but most of all a significant increase in offertories both in total, and on a per family basis. Thank you! Your generosity will allow us to be more confident about our future planning.

On top of all that, there was your response to the Gift Day Appeal - Let's Fix the Roof!

Your generosity has provided over \$100,000. Unfortunately there is insufficient time to thoroughly assess all the options and quotes and to issue firm contracts before the end of the year. Our plan is to hold a general information meeting for those interested from all congregations in either late January or early February 2012. This meeting will provide an opportunity for discussion and feedback on the warden's initial recommendations with the intention of having the work carried out around March 2012.

John Parker

(On behalf of the wardens including Claire Jones and Rob McGregor)

Taste & See.....

On Wednesday 23 November over 110 women gathered to Taste & See Cordon Bleu Chef, Rachel Billington create a 3-course Summer Gourmet Christmas menu and hear Suzanne Gorham share her reflections on Christmas. It was a wonderful time to enjoy sensational food with friends, and we came away inspired for our Christmas catering with some very handy tips picked up along the way.

Thank you to all those who worked so hard to bring this all together.



9am Report.

So passes another year for StMatts@School. In this year we have continued to see families come and join the congregation, and find ourselves in a bit of a baby boom, with more children to be born shortly. After a year of great work together the 9am team will take a summer recharge. With many away for the Christmas break, and a number of our key leaders having earned a break, the service will combine with those at 8am, 10am, 5pm, and 7pm for the holiday period. Look out for some of the StMatts@School members participating alongside members at these services. We are now asking our members to make ministry commitments for 2012, which is sure to be a great year under God, with St Matt's new Associate minister, Rev. Jon Phua. The calendar for the recharge period looks like this.

StMatts@School Summer Recharge Dates	
11 th Dec	Christmas Party (last service for year) '2012' Ministry Pledge Day
18 th Dec	Combined Christmas Pageant 10am
24 th Dec	Christmas Eve Services 5pm (family), 7pm traditional (HC), 9pm & 11pm Contemporary.
25 Dec	8am & 10am Holy Communion
1 Jan	New year's Day. 8am, 10am, 5pm (combined with 7)
8 Jan	8am, 10am, 5pm
15 Jan	8am,10am,5pm
22 Jan	8am,10am,5pm
29 Jan	Back to School Sunday – Ministry '2012' Semester 1 Enrolment Day.

We look forward to the baptism of two children, a visit from the Phua's, and the annual Christmas party as we conclude for the year on the 11 December. On Behalf of Rachel, Levi, Mia and Riley I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at StMatts@School for their fellowship and partnership in the gospel over the time of our service. The responsibility of this plant has taught me a lot about myself as a leader, both in strengths and limitations. We will continue to pray for the congregation and Jon and Lika Phua as they settle into their role at 9am.

LINK MISSIONARY REFLECTIONS FOR 2011

To our dear friends at St Matthews, We have been very grateful for your partnership during 2011. It has been a year of challenges in some significant areas of our lives, and we have been very conscious of your prayers. The big news is that it now appears much clearer that when we return to Seville we will be re-planting the church of the Ascension afresh in the town where we live on the outskirts of Seville. It's an option that has interested us since we arrived here, and now it looks as if the Lord is bringing it to fruition. To make this new direction possible, we will need your continued partnership in financial support, care for our family, and especially in prayer that God will use us all to extend his Kingdom in Mairena del Aljarafe. We look forward to sharing more with you when we see you soon, as we return for home assignment from December.

We wish you every blessing in Christ this Christmas and in the New Year.
As they say here, *,felices fiestas!*
Warmest regards
Ian, Ruth, Samuel, Emma and William.



McKinney's—AFES Perth

After 10 years of serving Jesus at Murdoch University, I'm having Long Service Leave! Give thanks for all that God has done at Murdoch Uni over the past 10 years! Thank God for the faithfulness of St. Matt's in supporting us prayerfully and financially for the past 10 years. It is a genuine partnership in ministry. We're looking forward to the next 10!
In Christian fellowship,
Steve :)

Rob & Leanna Haynes CMS Nungalinya College, NT

From Leanna

- That Leanna will find energy in a time of weariness with many things needing attention before the end of the year.
- Relief and strength for the Indigenous staff of our Anglicare programs for children across Arnhem Land, who face so many obstacles and hardships as they seek to work with the most vulnerable members of their communities.

From Rob

- Please pray for the flurry of end-of-year administrative activities at Nungalinya College and for strong responses as our teaching staff travel to Aboriginal communities to secure enrolments for 2012.
- Pray for restful holidays as many staff travel interstate over Christmas and the New Year and for unity of heart and spirit as we get underway with new timetables, the writing and teaching of new subjects, and as we "strengthen the souls of Christ's disciples" (Acts 14:22)

Blessings to all our praying friends at St Matthew's.

In Christ's love,

Rob

Grace & William Eyika

Dagoretti Corner, Kenya

We bless the Lord for everything that He has done for us. I hope all of you are fine and carrying on the wonderful work of Jesus.

Here is some of the mission work over here in Kenya in 2011:

- ◆ The Pastor's house was completed
- ◆ The High School was fully registered by the government and 33 graduated and 20 have joined universities and colleges
- ◆ There were 3 outreach missions - one to South Coast (Mombasa), another to Uganda (Soroti), 6 within Nairobi whereby a total of 2,800 souls received Christ as Lord and saviour.
- ◆ At the Primary School, 78 graduated and 60 joined high schools and vocational training schools.
- ◆ 150 people were baptized at various 9 mission outreach points and 22 children were dedicated to Christ.
- ◆ Kibera Baptist Church School enrolled additional 30 pupils to make a total of 150 pupils
- ◆ Embul bul Baptist Church school enrolled additional 25 pupils to make a total of 85 pupils.
- ◆ The Kamidakan Baptist Church Bible School graduated 4 pastors and enrolled 12 new ones, 2 of whom are women.
- ◆ We visited 11 churches in Australia, September-October 2010 - launched the book "God is my Employer" and the "10 year plan 2011-2021"
- ◆ 2011-2012 plans - we would like to buy at least 17 acres of land at a cost of Kshs.13,600,000 to be used for setting up a mission headquarters, build a pioneer building Kshs. 5,000,000 for vocational/income generating centre and progressively set up the primary/high school/vocation/recreational youth centre with agricultural production facilities. We also look forward to train 10 young men on various disciplines to enhance mission outreaches and in addition to that purchase a 4-wheel drive at a cost of Kshs. 1,500,000 to drive in muddy roads. Thanks for your fervent prayers and financial support for the year ending 2011.

Best of wishes during your Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours in Christ's Service,

William and Grace.



PASTOR'S HOUSE

Friday 16 December 2011

West Pennant Hills Public School Oval

5.30pm Family Festival begins

7.30pm Carols by Candlelight

Carols by Candlelight



Bring the whole family to get into Christmas spirit this year with carols and a narrated Christmas Story.



Come and join the festive activities!
Face painting, jumping castle, snack stalls,
glowsticks, live camels and heaps more!



Drinks and food will also be available on the night,
so why not bring the family for dinner!

5.30pm Family Festival begins 7.30pm Carols by Candlelight
West Pennant Hills Public School Oval Cnr of Church Street and Cardinal Avenue
For additional information please call 9479 3700
www.stmatts.org.au

Proudly Sponsored by


West Pennant Hills

WPH SPORTS CLUB
West Pennant Hills


pete's place
Café


Berry Village
Boutique
MOTEL

McBeaths **PHARMACY**


St Matthews
Anglican Church

DIGITAL CREATIVE SERVICES
DIGITAL BOOKS & BROCHURES ON DEMAND

MAG (Mission Aid Group)

Thank you to all for a wonderful year of donations. We have been able to send much needed goods to Tanzania because of the generosity of St Matthews. I also thank Karen Braga and Nerida Peart for putting on events to help make MAG more widely known throughout the parish. We have received many knitted squares for making rugs through these events and many other donations.

Our first meeting for next year is on Wednesday 15 Feb at 1pm in Hall 1. We would love to see you there as this is our annual meeting and we have at least one missionary coming from Tanzania to speak to us. More details later.

In January each year the supermarkets: KMart, Go Lo etc. have big stationery sales prior to school resuming, which are always needed e.g. exercise books under 100 pages, biros, blue, black and red.

Mr. Kilimanjaro hospital has also put in a request for NEW white cotton single bed sheets, NEW white pillow cases, and NEW white cotton hospital type blankets (waffle weave). I realise these are bigger items, perhaps home or bible study groups might like to put together for them.

MAG wishes everyone a happy and blessed Christmas.

Roslyn Dearden

ORANA SENIORS FELLOWSHIP **February Meeting**

Date: 1st February Time: 11.30am

Speakers: Jon and Lika Phua

We are delighted that Jon Phua, our recently-appointed new Associate Minister, and his wife Lika are able to be our speakers at our February meeting. This will be a great opportunity for us to get to know Jon and Lika, to hear them speak and to learn about their journey with Jesus. Book the date!

We extend a very warm welcome for all to join us at this Orana meeting.

A ‘RADICAL’ Start to 2012

During my Long Service Leave I read several, among them, two books by David Platt, ‘Radical’ and ‘Radical Together’. David is the Baptist Senior Minister of a Mega-church ‘with a difference’ in Birmingham, Alabama. I say with a difference for David is challenging this once comfortable middle class multi-million dollar building church to face squarely the radical comprehensive claims of Jesus Christ on believer’s lives. David is unsettling the middle class American church dream by placing it alongside the disturbing teaching of Jesus about discipleship. Reflecting on the images he saw in his church and the pictures still fresh in his mind from mission trips in impoverished, persecuted churches overseas, David writes, *I could not help but think that somewhere along the way we had missed what is radical about our faith and replaced it with comfortable. We were settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity [from Jesus] is actually about abandoning ourselves.*’ I found both these books very challenging and I have been caused to assess just how seriously I take the ‘RADICAL’ claims of Jesus over my life.

I felt led, I believe of God, to return from my leave and put in place for February through March a series based on Jesus/God’s teaching around the six topics and studies David Platt addresses in ‘Radical Together’. The current staff enthusiastically embraced this idea and so we are going to do everything in our power to saturate St Matt’s with this series. From our children’s ministry through youth, young adults, ‘Community Groups’ and adult ‘HOME Groups’ not to fail to mention our Sunday preaching, this series, ‘Radical Together’ will be studied and reflected on. I invite all of us to buy in and participate. The first book Radical will be our book of the month for February but it will be available for sale in early December for those who want to get a head start on reflecting on some of the essential ideas of radical discipleship.

Now, speaking of ‘RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP’, I also want to inform you that at our staff planning meeting in November the idea of having a yearly theme for our Christian community @ St Matt’s was floated. We all warmed to the idea and so for 2012 our theme for the year will be ‘RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP’. I’m really excited about this series because above everything else I want to be aligned with Jesus’ understanding of discipleship and not be content with the ‘comfortable discipleship’ I can so easily slip into. Please be praying for my preparation of this special series of studies and sermons over the next two months.

A ‘work in progress’ **RADICAL DISCIPLE**,

Steve

Hillston Mission 2011



A group of 14 Young Adults headed to Hillston on 24 November to spend 4 days visiting Lyn and Lindsay Whybrow, our BCA link missionaries, who run Christ the King Anglican Church. The time in Hillston was to encourage Lyn and Lindsay and the local church as well as reaching out to the people of Hillston. On Friday morning a presentation was given to students from years 7-10 at Hillston Central School to students. During this time the students heard a talk from God's word within small groups. It was then a real blessing to be able to get to know the students at lunch-time by hanging out with them.

A youth group was run on the Friday night with around 14 kids turning up which is a great turn out. We all found this an excellent time to be able to encourage the Christian youth within Hillston and to learn about some of the struggles they face. This was a valuable time of fellowship for all.

On Saturday we held an outreach event for the local community where a free car wash was held in town. This was very well received by the community and provided the team with more opportunities to get to know the local community and share why we were in Hillston and invite them to church events, as well as providing them with a show bag with Christian materials.

Members from all four churches within Hillston came together for a dinner put on by the team. It was a good chance for the team to hear various stories about Hillston and how God is working in their lives, the community and within various churches in the area.

Finally, a church service was held on Sunday morning run by the St. Matthews team. There was a big turn out and a children's program was run for children that attended church, which does not usually occur. Which was a great blessing that it was able to take place.

Overall, the mission went very well and the team was enthusiastically welcomed by everyone we met in Hillston. It was a valuable time of fellowship and encouragement for the people of Hillston and especially Lyn and Lindsay. The team were very encouraged by the experience and can see the need for mission trips to keep happening to Hillston, but especially for all of us to be continually praying for Lyn and Lindsay and the people of Hillston.



ST MATTS MISSION UPDATE

DECEMBER 2011

Please pray for link missionaries each week. For more information on all of our link missionaries please see the missions page at www.stmatts.org.au

4th December - Ian & Ruth Batey, CMS Spain

- Praise God for the Batey's recent involvement at St Matts mission dinner in October. The Batey's presented a video on their ministry and what they're up to, which served as a great encouragement to both the Bateys and people at the dinner. Pray this mutual support would continue.
- Please pray for the speedy renewal of our visas, and that we will thus be able to stick to the new date for our return to Australia for home assignment, which we have had to delay until the first week of November.
- Please pray that we would plan and prepare wisely for home assignment, both for our time in Australia and for the church here while we are away.
- Please continue to pray that God would open doors for his gospel in our daily lives.



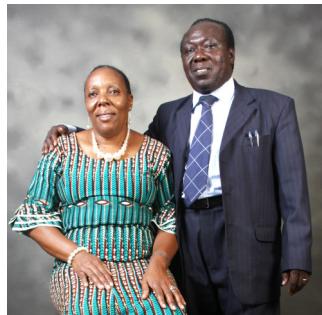
11th December - Morgan & Anna Powell, SIM

- We are thankful for the time we have been able to spend sharing with our supporting churches. It has been great getting to know people better and for them to get to know us better also.
- Give thanks for opportunity to share at St Matts mission dinner on October 15 about SIM short-termers orientation about language and culture learning.
- Pray for Morgan as he does some part time study this semester at SMBC.
- Pray for the health of Anna and the baby which is due December 12 and for Anika as she adjusts to the idea of having a sister.
- Pray that we might be wise, loving and patient parents.



18th December—William & Grace Eyika, Dagoretti Corner, Kenya

- Give thanks for Grace who is now well and sleeps much better. Pray for blessing on us to be afford to afford her new medicine which is much more expensive.
- Praise God for Grace Wangoi [85 yrs] in the church, who had a bad leg and was due for operation but the Lord has healed her leg and she is able to walk normally again without operation – the doctors are amazed.
- Pray for the primary school that was funded by Swedish Community that we will find new sponsors quickly. Pray also for future plans for land to relocate projects and for the title deed of the church to be granted.
- Pray for the famine and drought that has hit Kenya and the horn of Africa to be lifted by God.
- Ask God that the political campaigns starting in Kenya for elections in Aug 2012 not to descend into chaos again
- Pray for the students preparing for final exams – 12th grade to succeed and not riot due to stress.



25th December - PHCCEA

Grant Howard & Graham Castle @ PHHS—

- Give thanks for the history of effective ministry in the school and the positive reception this ministry has by students, staff and the local community
- Pray for a good conclusion to the year, especially year 12s going to schoolies
- Pray for gentleness and humility as we challenge false teaching and confront opposition
- Pray for opportunities to communicate with students and parents writing reports and P/T nights
- Pray for good planning and preparations for 2012 especially as we evaluate this year

Peter Murphy @ CTHS—

- Praise God for the Year 7 students' interest in studying the life of Jesus and year 8s considering what God's justice in the OT means for their lives.
- Pray for the adult volunteers leading year 10 discussions and lunchtime Christian groups.
- Pray for the opportunity to minister to staff, students and school families during difficult times. Recently, funerals and school families with loved ones undergoing surgery, have been occasions to offer support and comfort.

ST MATTS MISSION UPDATE

MISSION EVENTS IN AND AROUND ST MATTS :

MISSION PRAYER MEETING

Wednesday 7th December, 7.30 in New Line Cottage.

Please come along and join us in the important ministry of praying for mission throughout the world.
(Mission prayer nights are held the first Wednesday of every month) Next month: 4th January



The Christmas season is upon us... Chances are you haven't done all your shopping yet. Which is great, because you should consider buying a gift with extra value: a charity gift catalogue!



If you're unfamiliar with this process, it involves you making a donation to the organisation for a certain amount and you receive a Christmas card to give as a present outlining what the money has gone towards. Prices range from \$10 to about \$10000 so the options are endless and will suit everyone. It is an excellent way to reflect the generosity of Christ in and to our community!



Here are some useful websites you should check out:

- Arguably *The World's Most Useful Gifts* www.usefulgifts.org.au (TEAR Australia)
- *Gifts of Compassion* www.compassion.com.au/shop (Compassion Australia)
- *Smiles Gift Catalogue* www.worldvision.com.au/smiles (World Vision Australia)
- *Something Bigger* www.opportunity.org.au/SomethingBigger.aspx (Opportunity International Australia)
- *Heaven Sent Gift Selection* www.sim.org.au/giftCatalogue.shtml (SIM Australia)
- *The Perfect Gift Project* www.cms.org.au/giftcatalogue (CMS Australia)



CMS Summer School
7–13 January, 2012

*In the beginning it was good.
Morally and aesthetically good.
Very good, in fact ...*

The beginning of grace
studies from Genesis 1-11

For more info or to register visit: www.nswsummerschool.org.au

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. 1 Timothy 1:12