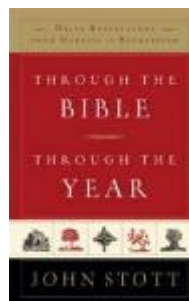


Book of the Month Through the Bible Through the Year Cost: \$20

Through the Bible Through the Year, (Candle Books, 2006) by the late John Stott is a set of daily readings from which he takes a verse or combination of verses and provides a characteristically stimulating and thought provoking meditation. His objective is to "recapitulate every year the whole biblical story from the creation in Genesis to the consummation in Revelation 22." This is done in the context of a church year divided into three equal parts.

Stott's book presents a deeply informed perspective on Biblical theology written in his usual highly readable prose. It provides sound teaching and exposition on the key passages of scripture and more importantly it stirs one to pray and to act on what one has discovered. I have not found a more helpful aid to daily study and meditation in fifty years.

Review written by John Wheeler



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

December 2012



December 2012 Preaching Calendar

2	The Comfort of God	Romans 8:5-39
9	Sowing & Reaping	2 Corinthians 9:6-15
16	Consuming and Contributing	1 Corinthians 12:1-11
23	Lessons and Commentary	Various
24	An Amazing Mother	Luke 1:26-56
25	The Amazing Baby	Luke 2:1-20
30	Amazing Testimonies	Luke 2:21-40

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 9.30am	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

Senior Minister	Steve Abbott	0417 410 596/9479 3700
Associate Minister	Jon Phua	9479 3700
Young Adults Minister	Nerida Peart	9479 3702
Youth Minister	Geoff Everett	9479 3700
Asian Minister	Kenny Liew	0448 515 408
Children's Minister	Jacki Hellstrom	9479 3700
Pastoral Care/Young Women	Karen Braga	0401 933 264
Pastoral Care Wed/Thurs	Bill France	9479 3700
Church Administrator	Kat Butler	9479 3700
Communications Co Ord	Tina Piccione	9479 3700

St Matthews Anglican Church

T: 02 9479 3700 F: 02 9479 3777

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



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 2012/January 2013 Pastoral Letter – Matt's Matters

Dear sisters and brothers,

It's hard to avoid the reality that Christmas is racing towards us. From the increasing amounts of junk mail in our letter boxes, the songs playing in shopping centres, not to mention the 'Toys and Tucker' Christmas tree in St Matt's foyer, all shout at us: 'Its **that** time of year again'. Christmas can be an awful time or an amazing time it largely depends on where we focus. Of course if you have lost loved ones in the past 12 months, Christmas can be a painful reminder that a precious member of your family can no longer share these special times with you. Yet despite this pain if we turn our focus from the human trappings of Xmas, to the first Christmas we will be drawn to an amazing divine drama. It is a pivotal point in history, which tells everyone on this planet they are spectacularly loved by their Creator. There at the first nativity God amazingly took on human flesh and came to dwell among us. The God of comfort has sent his Son as baby Jesus, the Saviour of the world. The babe of the crib, would become the Saviour Jesus on a cross and the Risen and Ascended Lord, who wears the Heavenly Crown.

It's an amazing event and I hope that all of us will once again find in this old, old story of Christmas a rekindled sense of joy, wonder and amazement rather than the 'Ho Hum' of a secular Xmas. No doubt we'll all to some degree get caught up in the gift buying, wrapping and giving cycle that marks this season, BUT can I encourage us all to not let this gift giving tradition obscure for us, and even those around us, the amazing gift of God at Christmas:

God's Christmas Gift

The Tag: *Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11*

The Wrapping: *This will be the sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Luke 2:12*

The Trimmings: *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people on whom his favour rests.' Luke 2:13-14*

The Contents: *Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God, saying, '...my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'*
Luke 2:28-32

The Gratitude: *A prophetess, Anna... gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.* Luke 2:36, 38

Notice how Anna's thanks for God's gift leads to her sharing the good news with others. This is also our calling and each of us should be looking for opportunities in this season to gently but courageously remind our unchurched family and friends of the first Christmas gift: Jesus the Christ child. At St Matt's we also provide easy events to invite family and friends to. This is why we have our special Family Festival and Carols by Candlelight event at West Pennant Hills School (Friday 21 December), and all our additional Christmas Eve Services. You can also remind people of your personal commitment to reflecting the generosity of Christ to the world by buying cards which represent a real gift to a third world person in great need. Tear, World Vision, CMS and many other Christian organisations provide such cards. For your convenience in December we'll once again be making available the Tear cards.

However, if we are truly thankful for God's Christmas gift it should produce fruit all year, not just Christmas. We could do a lot worse than take up the following New Year's resolutions:

During 2013 and beyond I resolve to:

- Give myself to unrelenting prayer
- Practice an undying devotion to read the Word of God
- Make unreserved commitment to love people impartially
- Embrace an unquenched heart for evangelism
- Commit myself to an unfading resolve to mature as a Christian
- Accept an unfailing commitment to serve as a team member at church
- Have an untiring determination to train, send and support servants of God.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit may we all, day by day, give ourselves to these lofty biblical values and may God grow us in this radical discipleship and his church through people coming to faith in Jesus.

Sue and I wish all the St Matt's family an amazing Christmas and a marvelous New Year, a year which brings rich, joy-full, spiritual blessing. 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 amazement and joy,

Steve Abbott

Prayer Points

- Thank God for the wonderful ministry of Bill and Jackie France over the past year, especially in Bill's roll as Minister of Pastoral Care and Seniors. Bill will have his last Sunday on 13 January and his final day will be Wednesday 16 January. Please pray for them as they head off for North West Australia to serve in that Anglican Diocese.
- 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 prepare outreach events and Christmas messages that will take place this summer. A guest speaker, Al Stewart, will deliver the message for the Festival/Carols event on Friday 21 December at WPH Public School. Steve will be preaching at the 7, 9 and 11pm Christmas Eve Services. Pray for creative, clear and concise messages, which communicate the gospel in a winsome and courageous way.
- Pray for excellent and effective use of the quieter month of January for planning and preparation for the 2013 ministry year.
- Steve will have a few days 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 in the New Year we'll have the finances to be able to find replacement staff:
 - ⇒ Part-time Pastoral Care and Seniors Minister
 - ⇒ Part-time Chinese Minister
 - ⇒ Part-time Office Administrator to job share with Kat Butler



St Matt's Diary and Notes

MISSION AID GROUP (MAG)

Thank you once again for all the great donations both bought and made. We will be taking our last 2012 delivery to the Kingsgrove Depot on the 18th December to complete a wonderful year of your generosity.

Some more detail of our fundraiser for next year on 16 March:

We have decided to have a car boot sale combined with an Art Show put on by your very own Art Group. We have some wonderful artists in that group and they have kindly agreed that 20% of any sales that are made will go to MAG. There will be gift cards and other small items for sale too. The car boot sale will be in our car park. There are approximately 46 spots available. You can book more than one space if needed or combine with someone else. If you would prefer to use a trestle etc. instead of your car boot that is fine. I have a plan with the spaces numbered so you can book wherever you prefer. It is \$10.00 on booking and 20% of sales to MAG or anything above that would be great. We will also have a BBQ going all day and Devonshire teas/coffees available from mid morning. It would be wonderful to have all the spots booked by St. Matts folk or relatives/friends of same. We hope it will be a great fundraiser for MAG and something a little different for St Matt's. Any further enquiries I can answer if you give me a ring: 0419 255 667.
Roslyn Dearden

ORANA SENIORS FELLOWSHIP

Wednesday, 5 Dec at 11.30am

Come and join us for fellowship and a delicious Christmas Lunch.

We will also be singing Carols and hearing Robyn Claydon speak on International Christmas Traditions.

Special Christmas Price: \$10

All welcome!

This is an occasion that should not be missed and we would love to see you and your friends.

Book the date!

CLIFF PERRIAM 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Cliff Perriam's daughters have invited his friends at St Matthew's to attend his 100th birthday afternoon tea and celebration service on Saturday 12 January at 2.30pm in the Pennant Hills Baptist Church. For catering purposes, please let Don or Gwyn Williams know if you will be there:

8850 6950 or

dandgwilliams@optusnet.com.au

no later than mid-December.

SECOND SUNDAY POTLUCK LUNCH

Sunday 9 December

This month's we are having a special Christmas lunch at 12:30 pm in

No 1 New Line Road, for those who

normally eat alone. There will be a \$5

charge, to cover costs so there is no need to bring anything, unless you have been previously organised to do so.

Enquiries Colleen Cummings (0403 239 321) or John Hain (9872 9965).



We have had a wonderful year at Matts4Minis in 2012, with both groups full. Last term we enjoyed our Family Fun Farm Day and we were able to show our dads and grandparents what we do at M4M. The 9am family service was also enjoyable. Several M4M families came along to watch their kids perform and experience our 9am church service.

This term we are looking at 'Christmas'. We have made some beautiful Christmas decorations in craft and we are looking forward to singing some songs at the Carols on 21 December! Come and see us sing on the stage at 6pm, our jingle bells are ready!

We are looking forward to the Christmas break to recharge, ready for a fun-filled 2013 at Matts4Minis!



Share the joy!



Through Toys 'n' Tucker, ANGLICARE provides Christmas food and gifts for those who otherwise would go without



Toys 'n' Tucker 2012

Week 4- Toys 'n' Tucker

Pick-ups have now started and the hampers are being packed.
Don't forget to check and see if your pick-up has been confirmed.
We have had an urgent request from the warehouse for gifts this week.

Gifts

- Babies both boys and girls
- 1-2 year olds both boys and girls
- 11-12 year olds both boys and girls
- teens both boys and girls

We have started getting pictures from collections and have been able to include them on our website and Facebook page, why not send us yours as well?

www.toysntucker.org.au



JANUARY 2013 SUNDAY SERVICES

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGES TO SOME OF THE SERVICES

30 DECEMBER	8am, 10am, 6pm, Chinese & SMAC
6 JANUARY	8am, 10am, 6pm, Chinese & SMAC
13 JANUARY	8am, 9am, 10am, 6pm, as well as Chinese & SMAC
20 JANUARY	Back to normal: 8am, 9am, 10am, 5pm, 7pm, Chinese & SMAC

Please note there will be NO Wednesday morning service on 26 December.

St Matt's Summer Service Schedule – December/January 2013

Due to the large numbers of people away after Christmas and early January, the Ministry Team has decided that the 5pm and 7pm Services will be combined to meet together at the 6pm timeslot for three Sundays: 30th December, 6th, and 13th January. Normal 5pm and 7pm services will resume on the 20th January.

We are convinced this is wise, as this will allow two reduced services to have good cross fellowship together at 6pm, reduce strain on hardworking rostered people, as it is much more manageable to provide one evening service rather than two, for greatly reduced numbers, as so many people are away. Previously, 5pm and 7pm people have been positive about the fellowship provided, by the combined service over this summer period.

Notably, there has been the suggestion that the 5pm and 7pm services should not combine over this period, as we should provide potential newcomers with the normal experience of when our services meet and what they are actually like.

However, we are convinced that due to the greatly reduced numbers, newcomers would not get a normal experience of what 5pm and 7pm are like anyway, and they would be more encouraged by seeing a better-sized combined core group, meeting at 6pm for those three weeks. Many churches across Sydney do have combined summer services, for the same reasons as we do, so this is a common phenomenon for visitors considering joining a new church.

Short Summer Break for 9am

Earlier in the year, a number of 9am leaders requested if there could be a short summer break for the 9am Service. We then surveyed the whole congregation, as to whether 9am should be closed for the Sundays of 30th December and 6th January. A large number responded that they were either away on holidays for these two weeks, or were directly in favour of this two week break for the 9am Service. Only one family suggested that 9am should not have this break.

As we considered all the responses, we were convinced that this two week break is a good idea, because of the rest it provides to rostered people, the large numbers of people away, and the strain it would put on those present to provide a service for a very small group.

Hence, Steve Abbott and I have decided that 9am will be closed for the proposed two Sundays of 30th December & 6th January, then resume as normal on 13th January.

In Christ,
Steve Abbott & Jon Phua

BCA NOMADS TRIP TO HILLSTON

We have returned from our sixth BCA Nomads trip to Hillston. The jobs this time included:-

- ⇒ Finishing the painting of the Rectory.
- ⇒ Painting the interior of the Church windows.
- ⇒ Further work on replacing the verandah decking on the Parish Centre.
- ⇒ Replacing taps.
- ⇒ Screwing down sections of the roof of the Parish Centre.

Our trip was planned to coincide with the retiring Bishop's last visit to Hillston. He had provided very strong support for Lyn & Lindsay Whybrow's ministry and they would welcome our prayers as the Diocese of Riverina seeks a replacement.

Pray for their need to expand the youth work & children's ministry in order to deal with dwindling numbers at church throughout the Diocese.

Lyn & Lindsay also strongly value the support and fellowship from these visits. On this occasion, Jenny Gibbs was able to spend time in fellowship with Lyn.

Norman Full



60 Seconds with Alison Passé-de Silva— St Matt's Warden

Name – Alison Marie Passé -de Silva
(formerly Baker)

Nick Name – Ali, Al, Cat (I've always been a big fan of cats).

Married – To Anthony since 2008.

Pets – We've just adopted a very talkative Bengal cat named Pesta!



Residence- A cosy little apartment in Waitara (I do enjoy not having to do very much housework as a result).

Work – Legal policy officer to the Chief Magistrate of the Local Court of NSW. I'm a solicitor by training and previously worked in an intellectual property/commercial law firm.

Food- I like most foods except seafood! My favourite treats include dark chocolate, cheese, raspberries. I worked in a Baskin Robbins store throughout uni and am still very fond of good ice cream. I enjoy cooking Thai food and desserts.

Social Activities – Latin dancing and Zumba classes with my mother-in-law, Charmaine, as well as playing the piano and of course spending time with Anthony, family and friends. When I have the chance, I love to get out into the bush for a walk, especially in wildflower season. It's not overly social but I'm also an avid reader.

Found Jesus – I can't pinpoint an exact date, having grown up in a Christian family, but it was some time in my early teens when I realised that it was up to me to make a decision to follow Jesus for myself. We came to St Matthews in 1996 and I had the benefit of being part of the youth program, which was integral to my personal growth.

Fellowship – Anthony and I currently attend the 5pm service. We moved from 7pm shortly after the start of 2009.

Currently Reading – I'm just finishing Romans.

Words of Encouragement – My home group has been looking at Colossians. I'm encouraged by chapter 1, where Paul describes a saviour who is both almighty and personal: Jesus is the image of God, through and for whom all things were created and in whom all things hold together, who reconciles us to God by his death on the cross.



Registrations for SRE Conference 2013 are now openWest | Jan 31st

Locations

WEST | Thursday 31st Jan | 9:30am-3pm

ST ALBAN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rooty Hill

NORTH | Saturday 2nd Feb | 9:30am-3pm

CHRIST CHURCH ST IVES

WOLLONGONG | Tuesday 5th Feb | 9:30am-3pm

DAPTO ANGLICAN CHURCH CENTRE

CITY | Saturday 9th February | 9:30am-3pm

ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL

This year's theme is "Mission in our Backyard" and we have some great seminars lined up to help equip you for your Scripture classes in 2013. Youthworks CEO Zac Veron will help us think through how the Gospel calls us together to go out into our world and proclaim Jesus.

- **Creative ideas for SRE**
- **Developing strong links between Church and SRE**
- **Ready to teach kindy**
- **Ready to teach year 6**
- **Starting out as a Coordinator**

For more information on these Seminars and the **SRE Conference** go to:

www.youthworks.net/events/smc-2013

WEDNESDAY CHURCH AND PASTORAL CARE

Orana is holding its final luncheon meeting of the year on Wednesday 5th December - author, and wife of a previous rector of St Matthews , Robyn Claydon, will be the speaker - it promises to be a great occasion as we celebrate Christmas and enjoy fellowship together. Our thanks go to Judy Full and her team for their organising of another year of excellent and varied Orana activities, thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

The Hesed group shared communion and a "Christmas" party together on 24th November . It was great that so many were able to be there. As has been said before, the mutual encouragement these folk bring to one another is truly inspiring. Our thanks to Marilyn Young and her 'team' for their thoughtful and caring support during the year.

The Midweek morning tea and service has continued to provide spiritual refreshment and encouragement to those folk who appreciate a more traditional form of worship but who are unable to get to church for the 8.00am service on Sunday mornings. Thanks go to that willing and loving band of helpers who provide the morning teas and who provided transport to those folk who needed it - the fact is that Wednesdays would not occur as they do without their efforts and we are thankful for them. Likewise to all those who have led and participated in services, preached, assisted with the communion, and played the organ or piano - the generous sharing of the gifts God has given you has enabled many people to grow and find comfort and strength in their faith.

To the Pastoral Care team and supervisors, and the meal providers and deliverers we also offer our thanks - caring for one another in times of need is such an important expression of the body of Christ and many in our church have been the beneficiaries of this ministry.

May the Lord continue to bless, encourage, and equip our church in these ministries.

Bill France

Pray for those with special needs:

Jan , Damon , Roy , Es and Laurie ,
Margaret , Dudley ,
Brian , Carolyn (Betty daughter),
Betty , Colleen , Jeannine , Jane ,
Cliff , Geoff & Margaret ,
Irene .



Community Issues Night – Living with Sexual Integrity Held on 5 November 2012

St Matt's was privileged to have Sexologist: Dr Patricia Weerakoon present to us on such an important topic, in such an engaging manner!



The evening began with interviewing Patricia, revealing her Sri Lankan upbringing, her training as a medical doctor, then moving to sexual health studies and specialising as a Sexologist. More recently, she has just retired from lecturing at Sydney University. Centrally in her story, her personal faith in Christ, meant that she taught and counselled on sexuality from a distinctly Christian worldview. Hence, she has conducted many seminars, appeared on various forums and programs, in Christian circles around Sydney.

Patricia's presentation was unmistakably based on biblical standards of sexuality, as she affirmed the goodness of God's plan for sex, how sex can be a bad god, and healthy sexual integrity based on Romans 12:2, that Christians are to be renewed by the transforming of our minds. She gave useful insights into the social, developmental and medical aspects of sexual desire. She then addressed Sexual integrity for teenagers, parents, marrieds and singles. Her manner was warm, enthusiastic and humorous, we all enjoyed her funny and matter-of-fact observations about sex.

After Patricia's presentation, she, along with Colin Noble and Nerida Peart formed a panel to answer questions from the audience. The majority of questions were text messaged to a set mobile phone, that allowed questions to be asked anonymously. Questions ranged across same sex attraction/homosexuality, dating, parental influences on sexuality and were well answered from the panel; the majority of questions obviously being answered by Patricia!

The evening ended with supper, and available copies of Patricia's new book: *Teen Sex by the Book*, promptly sold out! Patricia personally signed copies of her book for those quick enough to get a copy.

Thanks to those who helped with the evening: Sue Abbott, John Parker, John Carr, Geoff Everett, Colin Noble, Nerida Peart, Jack & Zara Packham.

*In Christ,
Jon Phua*

Christmas Eve Service— Children's orchestra and singers required

Once again we are having a children's/family service at 5pm on Christmas Eve. This will also be the time where a children's orchestra will play with singers, led by Jane Mills

(who is able to make a group of children/youth of varying ages and capabilities sound like they have been playing together for months). The children will then stay, have a bite to eat (supplied by the church) and play for those arriving for the 7pm service out in the portico. Usually we have 3 practices leading up to the event but in addition to Christmas Eve playing there is the possibility of playing at the carols (depending on the availability of the members). If you are interested in playing for these 2 events please contact Jane on 0402 890 172 and she will get the music to you and let you know the practice times. Music will be available from the first weekend in December after the 10am service. The Christmas Eve service is very family friendly and is extremely suitable to invite your friends and neighbours to – just a very short service of about 45 min including a couple of well known carols, some bible reading and a fun kids talk.



2012 and beyond

It is an exciting time of the year – all our kids programs are in recess, and our leaders are resting, I will be on 3 weeks break from Christmas day. Pray for my good use of time as I set things in motion for 2013, for the holiday programs and for a healthy year ahead.

Kids ministry is one of the vital ministries in the church. We want to have a church overflowing with families and we should be praying for that. But along with families we need leaders – both in training and mature Christians, to cater for the many programs. If you have some time, have a heart for kids and could volunteer during the year – fill out

the gift forms or email me directly. We are always ready to find a place for you to be involved.

Merry Christmas to all!!!

Jacki Hellstrom



Christmas / New Year it is a good time to review our budgets and our priorities. With this in mind, can I encourage you to review your giving to this important work and to give automatically very month or quarter to help smooth out our cash flow.

And for the person who has everything, why not give a gift to PHCCEA on their behalf? They may be delighted to be furthering Christian Studies in our local high schools.

Why support this very important program

- There are over 3000 local students in these two high schools most of whom have been through the Christian Studies (Scripture) program, at some stage, in these schools.
- Currently over 1600 students are regularly and systematically being taught about God, his Son Jesus, and His Word by our two very talented specialist teachers, Graham Castle and Peter Murphy.
- The program has been running over 27 years and has provided entry into our many youth-related activities at St Matthews and twelve other local churches
- This work is entirely funded by donations from people like you - congregations in our local churches. There is a danger that without your financial assistance we will not be able to continue God's valuable work in our local community
- The 2011 census confirms that fewer and fewer young people are seeking contact with our God and his purpose for their lives. This program is addressing that.
- This is local mission to our local community. If we don't do it, who will?

How can I give?

To directly support this program:

(Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible).

Direct deposit to PHCCEA Inc Commonwealth Bank, Pennant Hills BSB 062 225 A/c N^o. 0090

3146 then email the treasurer at treasurer@phccea.org.au advising of your address so your receipt can be posted. You can set this to give automatically, monthly or quarterly.

1. Credit card donations – see back of current PHCCEA newsletter for details or ring John Hain (9872 9965) for a form to be emailed to you. We can debit your card at regular intervals, that you decide.
2. Cheque posted to PHCCEA PO Box 346 Pennant Hills NSW 1715
3. Cash or cheque in an envelope with your contact details – for the receipt, clearly marked PHCCEA. Special envelopes are available on the table near the fire hose. Then put the envelope in the church collection plate.

Check out our web site: <http://www.phccea.org.au/>

Enquiries: Jenny Gibbs or John Hain. Our church reps on the Pennant Hills and Cherrybrook Christian Education Association (PHCCEA).

LINK MISSIONARY AND MINISTRY UPDATE

“I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me” – Romans 15:30

How can we support our Link Missionaries and Ministers and learn about mission?

- ⇒ Pray regularly. Use St Matt's Prayer Diaries for ideas.
- ⇒ Attend Missionary Prayer Night on the 1st Wednesday of each month in NewLine Cottage at 7.30pm
- ⇒ Receive prayer letters from Link Missionaries and write back to them!
- ⇒ Find them on Face Book
- ⇒ Give financially

Do our Link Missionaries need our financial as well as prayer support?

Absolutely! Missionaries make many sacrifices to be on the field including:

- ⇒ Being away from family and friends to do mission
- ⇒ Giving up the security of home ownership
- ⇒ Doing without a car, having a very old car or sharing a car between two families (all scenarios from some of our link missionaries)
- ⇒ Making do with little pay when there are lots of normal things to pay for!

Please prayerfully consider giving to the St Matt's Gift Day to help our Link Missionaries with very practical and necessary expenses that we all take for granted in our own lives.

What Missions and Events are coming up?

Nepal Trip – Seven Women Project

Brad and Marissa from 7PM service, along with 13 other people are going to Nepal in December 2012 - January 2013 to volunteer at the skills training centre in Kathmandu that Seven Women project runs, as well as visiting other fair trade businesses and development projects around Nepal.

Taste of Zimbabwe: St Matt's Saturday 8 December at 5:30pm

Steve, Nigel, Pat, Pamela, Mark and Jack and Zara will take time to tell us and show us what it was like to visit and minister in Zimbabwe with Reuben Zivagwe who has set up Living Word Ministries to reach the Tonga people of the Zambezi Valley with the gospel and to support orphans in Kotwa.

Tickets including dinner are a steal at \$10pp or \$25 per family.

WHO HAVE WE HEARD FROM LATELY?

Rob and Leanna Haynes – are now on deputation in Sydney after serving in the Northern Territories. Rob was working at Nungalinga College, a Christian residential training college for Indigenous people, and Leanna was serving with Anglicare.

Rob and Leanna Haynes email: rlhaynes@cms.org.au

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the constancy and commitment of your prayers, your financial support, your friendship and love you have given to us and to the Lord's work in North Australia for 24 years straight. Thanks too to those who set up the flat in Blacktown and provided a hamper of goodies for us as we arrived in early November. Thanks for the lovely greeting on the card too. We look forward to seeing some of you perhaps at Summer School in Katoomba early January, and then we have two weeks in February-March given over to spending time in West Penno at St Matt's.

News

We finished well in both our respective work places, with lovely farewells, and a smooth handover of duties. We put our car on the Ghan, got on ourselves and had someone else drive us to Adelaide. A more relaxing way to move south. Meanwhile our goods travelled by road to arrive in Goolwa a few days later. Our kids helped us 'download' into our new home in Goolwa, SA, and we spent a couple of weeks emptying boxes and trying to find places for things in the place that is still Leanna's mum's home (already fully furnished).

We had a two week holiday with mum in Yarrawonga, Victoria, a few more days at home, then drove to Sydney in our 'retirement vehicle', a Kia Sorento that has already done duty for luggage, mum's walker, and up to 7 passengers (4 of our 7 grandchildren that time).

So please pray:

- ⇒ For the team of CMS missionaries continuing to live and work in the Northern Territory. Ruth Brigden at Numbulwar; Philip and Deanne Gerber en route to Angurugu on Groote Eylandt; Liz and Terry McCoy at Nungalinga; Mandy Jones and Wayne Oldfield at Nungalinga; Tavis and Kate Beer in Katherine.
- ⇒ All, except Ruth Brigden in Numbulwar, are in their first term of CMS service. The same goes for the Theology staff at Nungalinga College, including especially the principal (Dr Jude Long) and assistant principal (Jenny Johnson).
- ⇒ For clear thinking and willingness to share much of our lives and passions as we prepare for all the various deputation resources and occasions.
- ⇒ For our first deputations in Liverpool and Riverwood parishes.
- ⇒ For really helpful times with our CMS colleagues, both in giving and in receiving from each other.
- ⇒ For a wonderful Summer School this coming January.
- ⇒ That Aboriginal Australians and the growth of Indigenous churches will have a regular place in the strategic planning of our churches and of CMS in the years to come.

*With our love,
Rob and Leanna Haynes*

Steve and Melinda McKerney – serving with Murdoch Christians United (MCU) on Murdoch University campus, Perth, WA. Check out the funky MCU website here (or at <http://mcu.org.au/>).

McKerney News

As I write, the uni students are finishing exams and the next events on the calendar are a local Mission in Perth, Bus Trip and the AFES NTE (National Training Event) in Canberra. We're doing a mission before NTE and in Perth for the first time ever! Please pray for Steve as he speaks at 4 events at East Fremantle Baptist Church: 1. A 'bring-your-house-to-youth-group' night, 2. An evangelistic church service, 3. A Men's Night at a local pub and 4. An Evangelism Training Night for the church. Please pray for the 15 students as they are stretched beyond their comfort zones with outreach events for age ranges from little ones up to those in Retirement Villages, as well as walk-up evangelism in the heart of Fremantle. And please pray for safe travel as we cover 8,500kms in a bus from Perth to Canberra and back for NTE.

It's been a good year in so many ways – the growth of individual students in Christ and the fruit of them reaching out to those around them is precious gold! The family is doing well, even with the dynamics of having 2 (and almost 3) teenage boys in the house! God continues to sustain us in our busy lives. It was good to catch up with Fiona Li and Andy and the girls as they visited Perth recently. May you end the year by reflecting on God's outrageous generosity to us in Christ and may this spur you on to live for the praise of His glory in 2013. Thanks again for your prayers and financial support for us on the other side of Australia as we partner together in gospel ministry.

*With much love in Christ,
Steve & Melinda, Jaidon, Lewis, Ezra and Sheamus McKerney*

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM WILLIAM AND GRACE EYIKA.....

While we celebrate Christmas and remember Christ's birth, we need to remember that there are the poorest of the poor who cannot afford a decent meal or clothing, be it the best occasion.

Throughout the year St Mathews has been at the forefront on meeting the basic needs of the poor and we are thankful to God. As we celebrate Christmas, we lift you up in prayers of thanksgiving to God for a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

It is our continued prayer through the Christmas boxes appeal that the poorest of the poor will have an opportunity to celebrate in a better way.

Have blessed services and celebrations!

William and Grace



MESSAGE FROM THE BATEYS.....

Dear Friends at St Matthew's

We thank God every time we remember you, with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel.
(Php 1:3-5)

As we approach Christmas we are very mindful that this time last year we were in Australia, and able to spend time with family. Now that we're back in Spain, we remember how different it is here at Christmas. The academic year is not winding down as in Australia, but in full swing. We used to find it strange that the weather gets colder at this time, not warmer, but now we have learned to associate the cold with Christmas, and we quite like it! We are also used to the fact that in Spain Epiphany and the gift-bearing wise men are more important than Santa. It should be a good thing that Christmas gifts are associated with biblical characters rather than the coca-cola-coloured, big fella. But sadly it's just as commercial here as everywhere else. What a great reminder of our shared mission to proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour, as much in Australia as in Spain, making the most of the unique opportunities that Christmas brings. May the Lord bless you with every blessing in Christ as you celebrate and proclaim him this Christmas. With love and thanks for your partnership, and fond memories of you all!

In Christ

Ian, Ruth, Samuel, Emma and William.

MESSAGE FROM CHRIS AND SHARON EKINS, Coast Evangelical Church at Foster

"Hi people, Thanks for your ongoing partnership in the gospel! This year has been a big one for our family and for Coast Evangelical Church. God gave us another beautiful little girl (Chloe Hope); we started a new service; we are employing another pastor who's starting in January; and we are baptising some more people, on the 9th December, who've started following Jesus. Next year we are looking to expand our high school scripture ministry (to include year 9) and to start a program run by Christians Against Poverty to help train people in our church and the wider community to manage their money better so they can get out of debt. Please keep praying for God to draw many more into His kingdom as we present Christ as clearly, compellingly and lovingly as we can."

Chris & Sharon Ekins

MESSAGE FROM JENNY FALLON.....

Dear Friends and Supporters,

In Burkina, the translation of the Fulani language New Testament has recently been completed, led by Australian Robin Watson and his team. After 10 years of painstaking work, checking and rechecking, this precious work will be dedicated in January. Can you imagine what this means to the fledgling Fulani church and to the outreach amongst Fulanis?!

Closer to home, one of the more regular students at my weekly English class at Campsie is A, an Afghani refugee (see photo). I've learnt a lot about how hard it is trying to get a visa to live in Australia. A has been here nearly 3 years and has lived with significant restrictions and lots of uncertainty during that time. We're praying, not only that his visa will be granted soon, but that he'll come to rest in Jesus.

Would you pray with us for this man, who's become far more than just one of my students?

*Serving the King of kings together,
Jenny*



HANDEL'S "Messiah"

Radio Community Chest 's 72nd annual presentation of George Handel's immortal oratorio "Messiah" will be held at:

**Sydney Town Hall on
Wednesday, 12 Dec 2012 at 7:30PM, and on
Sunday, 16 Dec 2012 at 2:15PM**

The oratorio highlights the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Handel composed this grand musical piece in 1741 with scriptural text compiled by Charles Jennens from the King James Bible, and from the Book of Common Prayer.

Tickets are \$32.50 (\$27.50 concession) are available for purchase at the City Recital Hall, online at <http://www.cityrecitalhall.com/> or by phoning the box office on (02) 8256-2222. Visit <http://www.handelsmessiah.org.au/performances.html> for more information.

Friday 21 December 2012

West Pennant Hills Public School Oval
5.30pm Family Festival begins
7.45pm Carols by Candlelight

Carols by Candlelight



Bring the whole family to get into the 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, petting zoo
dunking machine 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 7.45pm 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



• Pennant Hills Physiotherapy Centre • Bakers Delight – West Pennant Hills

Thornleigh
Golf Centre

Gingerbread House Night

On Wednesday 21st November, almost 100 women gathered together to enjoy a fun filled evening of building and decorating gingerbread houses for Christmas. It was a wonderful evening and with so many visitors with us it was a great opportunity to make new friends while enjoying time with our "old" ones! Nerida's talk was both entertaining and thought provoking. A big thank you to all those who worked so hard to set up, pack down and hostess! It was a tremendous effort. I would also like to thank Alan Turner for his humble and faithful support of the women at St Matts by providing all our sound and lighting needs for several years. Indispensable! May you all enjoy your lolly laden houses this Christmas!



ORCHESTRA FROM FOR 5PM CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Jane Mills is looking for musicians & singers to play in the 5pm Family Christmas Eve Service.

Rehearsals will be on:

Saturday 15 Dec 2-4pm & Thursday 20 December 4-6pm.

Musicians are required for both rehearsals,
singers are only required on Thursday.

We also have the opportunity to play on Friday Night at the Carols by Candlelight at WPH Primary School which occurs on 21st December.

Music is available at St Matt's after 10am church today the 2nd December from Jane.

Please contact Jane on 0402890172 to enquire or arrange to pick up music.



CHRISTMAS CARDS & GIFT CARDS ON SALE TODAY

MOTHERS UNION: Available between the 8am and 10am services, and at 9am will be cards from Mothers' Union and also supporting the Kibera Paper project set up by CMS in the largest slum in Nairobi. Prices between 60cents and \$2.50. Any questions call Jan Donohoo on 9873 2640

TEAR GIFT CARDS: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."
(2 Cor. 8:9)

Give a useful gift this Christmas. Each gift contributes to the poverty-fighting work of TEAR Australia's Christian partners, and spreads God's kingdom.

Prices: \$5-\$10,000

Catalogues available now. Cards will be sold after each service.

INDONESIOAN CHRISTMAS CARDS: Will be on sale after Church services on the 2 & 9 December. These cards are made by women in 3 remote villages in South Sulawesi. The project was started by Marcelle Rogers in 1999 when she and Peter were missionaries over there. The project assists over 100 women to achieve a better standard of living for their families. Call Robyn Young on 9634 4938.

Another local author

Graham Lovell (8 am) has joined David Hewetson and Pat Redlich as recent book authors, with his work, *Gregory of Neocaesarea: Evangelist in the Province of Pontus*.

Gregory is reputed to have converted his whole community to Christianity. His life provides a platform for the study of the advance of Christianity in the first three hundred years, a period for which we have only limited information.

Gregory is particularly important for our study of early Christianity since he lived fifty years **before** the conversion of the Roman emperor, Constantine.

Gregory confronted both the local cults and faced the challenge of the Roman state, both of which were challenged by the rise of Christianity. This (academic but readable) work provides new insights into the dramatic events of those times.

