

Book of the Month

BIBLE BITES 365 DEVOTIONS FOR AUSSIE FAMILIES
by Ladeane Lindsay (Great Family Christmas Present)

Cost: \$ 20.00

Teaching our children about Jesus is the most important responsibility a parent, carer or grandparent has in their family. Yet, for many of us, it's easier to leave Bible teaching to the leaders in our church and schools. 'Bible Bites' is designed to make family devotions a fun and interactive time which gets kids aged 3-12 excited about their growing faith.

Review from www.Youthworks.com.au



Matt's Matters

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



December '10 /
January '11



December 2010 Preaching Calendar

5 December	Generosity Flows from Grace	Luke 19:1-10
12 December	Faithful Service with God's Gifts	Luke 19:11-27
19 December	Lessons, Commentary & Pageant	Various
24 December	The Gift of the Father's Love	John 3:1-21
25 December	The Gift of the Father's Love	John 3:1-21
26 December	Kept Safe by the LORD	Psalms 12

St Matt's Services

Sunday 8am	Morning Prayer / Holy Communion
Sunday 9am	St Matts @ School; WPH Public School
Sunday 10am	Multi Generational Family Service
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 Peart	Young Adults	9479 3702
	Rob Conway	Youth Minister	9479 3704
	Wendy Estall	Pastoral Care/Seniors Minister Mon - Thurs	9479 3707
	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	9479 3700
Administrator	Kat Butler	Monday-Friday, 9am - 5pm	9479 3700
Organist	David Parsons		9871 8007



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.

St Matthews Anglican Church
T: 02 9479 3700 F: 02 9479 3777
E: office@stmatts.org.au www.stmatts.org.au



Reflecting the generosity of Christ
St Matthews
Anglican Church

www.stmatts.org.au

Pastoral Letter—Steve Abbott

Dec-Jan 2010/11



Dear sisters and brothers,

The end of another busy year of life and ministry is rapidly drawing to a close but not with a whimper. The Christmas season affords us

all countless wonderful opportunities to testify to our allegiance to our Lord, Jesus Christ. I hope you will join Sue and me in reaching out to your family, neighbours and friends, inviting them to participate in at least one of our scheduled outreach events; they are all listed on our Christmas postcards. We have lots of additional postcards available for us all to use as invitations to the various gospel activities, so feel free to take a bundle and pass them on.

For various reasons, one particular verse has been occupying my thoughts in recent weeks and I'd like to briefly share it with you. 2 Corinthians 8:9 reads *'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.'* The context is the Apostle Paul's encouragement to the Christians of Corinth to provide financial support for famine relief for the Jerusalem church. He is using this wonderful sentence to inspire generosity based on the generosity (grace) the Christians know they have in Jesus. As with so many other things, if we want to know how to respond to life's challenges and circumstances we will always do well to contemplate the person, practices and priorities of Christ. This is an especially apt text for us to pause and reflect on in the Christmas and New Year season. It was because of humanity's spiritual poverty (*'dead in sin'*) that Christ renounced the riches of glory, so that through his poverty we might become spiritually rich (*'righteous in Christ'*). The poverty that Christ embraced began with the incarnation (*'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us'*, John 1:14) but climaxed in the cross (*'My God, my God why have you forsaken me'*, Mark 15:3). God's glorious eternal Son embraced both human flesh in becoming a baby and human sin in becoming the one and only sacrifice for the world's sin in his crucifixion. It is by this poverty you and I and all other Christians stand showered with the riches of full and complete salvation. There can be no greater inspiration for being generous with all of our resources: treasures, talents, time and our testimonies, than the person and passion of Jesus Christ. May Christ's poverty inspire us all to spend all we are and have for his glory and his gospel.

Christ's poverty is worth celebrating as Paul does with a spontaneous outburst of gratitude at the conclusion of his discussion in 2 Corinthians 8-9: *'Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.'*

Speaking of celebrating and knowing our next Matt's Monthly won't be until February, I want to ask you to put a very significant date in your diaries for 2011. On the early evening of Saturday 19 February we plan to have a whole parish celebration where we'll share a meal together, participate in a wonderful time of corporate worship, creatively celebrate the many blessings of 2010 and cast the vision for the year ahead. We plan to make this an annual combined congregational event. We get so few opportunities to get together across our congregations and the reality is that most people know very little about congregations other than their own. What a great joy it will be to step back and look at the larger canvas of our St Matt's family and hear and see what God has been doing to build his church among us. We have booked Cherrybrook Community Centre for the event and it will be for the whole family. I will be approaching people in the next week or so to join a committee to assist in planning this event with the hope of a meeting prior to Christmas and then several more from mid-January on. Please pray that we'll be able to pull together a great team to organize this event and that this 'Celebration of God's Work' among us will receive wide support across our Christian community.

Can I say a huge thanks to the Staff, Wardens, Parish Council and the cast of hundreds who have served our church throughout 2010. It has been my wonderful privilege to oversee this ministry but without your ministry there'd be very little to oversee. I thank God for you all. To all the members of St Matt's, Sue and I wish you a Christmas where the grace of Jesus Christ floods your inner being afresh so that you infectiously overflow with joy and thanksgiving. Finally for those of you travelling over the school holiday period please drive carefully, have a safe and refreshing break and return ready to give yourselves to fulfilling our St Matt's vision *'to be a church which reflects the generosity of Christ in and to our community', in 2011.*

In Christian fellowship,

Steve Abbott

Prayer Points:

- Please pray for my preaching throughout December and January and especially for my message for Christmas Eve on John 3:16 'The Gift of the Father's Love' as there are always so many newcomers and guests at these services.
- Sue and I will have a brief holiday down the South Coast over the New Year and will be back on 7 January. Pray for a safe and refreshing break.
- Pray for the planning and preparations for the Saturday February 19 'Celebration' at Cherrybrook Community Centre. Pray for a great team and creativity in planning.

St Matt's Diary and Notes



SECOND SUNDAY POTLUCK LUNCH **12 December and 9 January 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 (9484 0174) or
Pat (9868 4630).

Annual Christmas **Lessons & Carols** **Service with the** **St Matthew's Singers**



Thursday 16 December at 7.30pm
St Matt's in the Church. The service will
be followed with supper.
Everyone is welcome to attend!

McKerneys visiting St Matt's

Steve & Melinda who are currently based
in Perth with AFES will be visiting all the
St Matt's services on 2 January 2011.
Please diarise this date.

DATES TO DIARISE FOR 2011

- ♦ **Mon 17 – Fri 28 January**
Next Gen Conference, Youth Leaders
- ♦ **Weekend 23-26 January**
Summer Madness, Youth Camp
- ♦ **Friday 28 January**
Friday Night Live re-commences
- ♦ **Saturday 19 February**
"St Matt's Celebration"

MISSION AID GROUP (MAG)

Thank you to everyone for the wonderful support you have given us during the year. The gifts we have sent will be appreciated and well used in Tanzania. The last container for the year was to be packed on 25 November for shipping.

Suggestions for the next 2 months are:
sewing cottons (all colours); any widths of
elastics and 2m lengths of cotton materials
(the brighter the better) for sewing schools.
During January we concentrate on exercise
books (up to a 100 pages), rulers, biros,
pencils, computer paper, and any stationery
item is appreciated.

Most stores/supermarkets have stationery
items on at very good sale prices in January.
The next MAG meeting is on 16 February
2011. This is our annual meeting and we
hope to have a speaker from Tanzania with
us. More on that later. The MAG Group
wish everyone a happy, Holy and blessed
Christmas.

Roslyn .

MAG BOOK FAIR



to support the Mission Aid Group
of CMS
Saturday 19 March 2011

Please start gathering books
Collection begins late January
2011

January 2011 Preaching Calendar

2 January	How Long O LORD	Psalm 13
9 January	The LORD Looks Down	Psalm 14
16 January	Fear the LORD	Psalm 15
23 January	Set the LORD Before You	Psalm 16
30 January	St Matt's State of the Church Message 2011: "Imitating Christ's Generosity"	1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1



LIVING OUTSIDE THE GARDEN
**MEN FACING
TEMPTATION**
SPEAKERS: DAVID COOK, JUSTIN MOTE



Katoomba Men's Convention

Men at S. Matt's is planning to attend the weekend 4th-5th Feb 2011

The plan is to travel up and stay somewhere together.

You can register online at <http://www.mkc.kcc.org.au/>

Early bird rate finishes on 21st December – register as part of the St Matt's group.

ST MATT'S FINANCIAL UPDATE

OFFERINGS FOR NOVEMBER 2010

	2010	2009	2010 Budget
Offerings + Rectory	62,976	64,900	59,200
Weeks	4	5	4
AWG - November	15,744	12,980	14,800
AWG - YTD	14,258	13,494	14,800

Our total giving for the month exceeded our budget by \$3,776 (6.4%). This was a much better result following a very disappointing October when our giving was down on budget by more than \$10,000. However, after 11 months and as we go into the final month of the year our total giving is still \$26,000 (3.6%) behind budget..

Please pray for God's grace of giving to fall on us all.

Pastoral Care Ministry

Whilst most of the caring ministries will not be meeting until February, we would like our members to please be assured that pastoral care ministry will continue. If you have a need over the Christmas period please feel free to contact Wendy .



Orana

Orana's Christmas meeting on 1 December was well attended, with a delicious lunch enjoyed by all and the opportunity to celebrate with the singing of Carols. Orana is a wonderful place for folk to gather, to enjoy fellowship and to participate in a program prepared especially for our senior folk. The next meeting of Orana will be held on 2 February. We invite you to attend, and if you have a friend who is lonely, whether they come to church or not, please bring them along with you. Everyone is welcome!

Lay Pastors/Pastoral Carers

We are thankful to God for those among us who come alongside of us in times of trouble, or sadness or when we are not well. The team of Lay Pastors and Pastoral Carers are ever-willing to lend a listening ear, to pray with you, or to offer a word of encouragement. Should you have a heart for pastoral care and are interested in joining this Team in caring for others in either a long-term care relationship or through short-term visitation, please phone Wendy .

The Christmas Party for Lay Pastors and Pastoral Carers will be held on 6 December at 8.00pm in NewLine Cottage.

Skills for Caring

During 2011, Skills for Caring has been scheduled for 7 March, 6 June, 5 September, and is open to all. The Christmas meeting will be held on 21 November. Please mark these dates in your diary. Invitations to attend will be extended closer to each date. These evenings are great opportunities for anyone interested in improving skills in caring for others.

Meal Ministry

Currently there is no shortage of prepared meals in our freezer. Thank you to all for your wonderful generosity and willingness to prepare and provide meals. This is a wonderful ministry and so much appreciated by those who receive these meals. Please check with Fiona Mead on 9875 3069, to see whether meals are required over the next month or so. Just a reminder that all meals need to be labelled with the date and ingredients. Please bring the prepared meal to the Meals Ministry freezer which you will find in the Warden's Office.

Wendy Estall's Prayer Requests:

- Please pray for our senior folk who are grieving, isolated or lonely, particularly over Christmas
- Pray for pastoral care ministries including Orana, Lay Pastors and Carers, Meals Ministry, Hesed, Intercessory Prayer Network and the Church Missionary Society's Mission Aid Group (MAG)

CJ DAY 2010

Fundraising Dinner & Auction

FUN: This was indeed a fun night. Great live music, a good dinner for only \$5, a clear sense of God's spirit among his people who were a cross-section of all services and ages and cultures, an entertaining auction, laughter, chatter, and some memorable moments.

Moments like Evelyn and Sandra competing for the auction of "The Ultimate Man" to do handi-work around their houses – in the end they both won, and the men are generously doing two sessions. Or like the young adult women and the young adult men bidding for a "date" with one of four young men. Rumour has it that Rob Conway's idea of a "date" was someone to bath his young children! But luckily for the four guys, Rob was outbid. Nerida Peart is now the proud owner of a lightweight surfboard. Shane Dirks' pile of firewood will be a little smaller after several bootloads were purchased on the "silent auction". And someone paid \$140 for a \$30 iTunes voucher.

MISSION FOCUSED GENEROSITY: Everyone, whether they donated or purchased or just made a bid, was responding to the advice at the start of the night to give generously, over the value of what was being received, because the point was not to get a bargain but to give to support gospel ministry. And from those donations, about \$15 000 was raised. We all paid too much and were pleased to do so.

CHALLENGING TALK: After the fun of the auction, Steve challenged us to pledge a lump sum of money. We were challenged to give in response to God's generosity to us, to enable us to send another worker in to the harvest field, that is children and youth work in our local area. He asked us to focus not on how much we were giving but how much we were keeping for ourselves, in recognition that everything that we have comes from God. From pledge cards given on the night, another \$25 000 was raised. So we raised 50% of the total needed.

BUILDING COMMUNITY: Events like the CJ Day Dinner do not happen without the support of the St Matt's community. We had over 60 items offered for auction, a team of about 20 people setting up beforehand, buying and preparing food, serving and cleaning up, as well as many up-front roles like interviews, talks, music, auction and MC. As the organizer I can confirm that it was not run perfectly, but it was a pleasure to co-ordinate so many willing and cheerful people.

SUPPORTED BY PRAYER: We know that without prayer, nothing good can be achieved. This event was prayed about for many weeks beforehand, as well as on the night. God blessed our gathering, and the glory goes to him.

Sue on behalf of Kerry , John , Andrew , John and John .

Ps. Pledge forms are still available for the those who missed out on the auction.



Are you needing prayer?



Is your need related to health, a relationship issue, exam worries or teen troubles. Maybe it concerns financial problems, retirement worries or any number of other issues. Is it someone you love who is needing prayer?

St Matts Intercessory Prayer Network (IPN) is ready to help. This network of Intercessors, chosen by the Senior Minister, will pray for you.

Your request will be kept in the strictest confidence and not discussed with anyone, unless it concerns someone at risk.

To access the IPN, you send your prayer request by email to prayer@stmatts.org.au. If you do not have email, you are invited to phone your request to Wendy Estall on 9479 3707 or if the request is urgent, please phone 0437 885 848.

As your need is met, or as changes take place, you are requested to keep the team updated so that prayer remains appropriate and accurate.

At no time will you be approached by team members over prayer issues, other than the Co-ordinator who may contact you to ask for progress reports, or Pastoral staff who may care for you.

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16 NIV).

HELP NEEDED?

‘My name is Danial . I migrated to Australia about 5 years ago and now I live here and have permanent residency status. I finished my first degree in Bachelor of Engineering Science at UTS and now am a part time student in Finance degree at UTS. Due to lack of work experience over the past year I could not find any employment in the area of my previous degree despite many attempts. I am looking for any sort of work experience or employment in either of these two areas of my qualification. I explained the situation to UTS and they promised me to provide public liability insurance for any work experience in Finance. I ask the members of St Matt’s Anglican Church to help me to find any employment or connect me to someone who might be able to assist. Above all I ask you to pray about this issue for me. Please contact me on 0425 822 205 or Danial.Rahnamaeian@student.uts.edu.au if you can assist in any way.’

Pray for those with special needs:

Jan , Damon , Margaret , Dudley ,
Brian , Moby (Grandson of Keith),
Caroline (Betty daughter),
Jeannine , Jane , Jill , Kevin ,
Cliff , Geoff & Margaret , Stan ,
Bev , Elsie , Rob (Kim father),
Janet , mother of Sally (Member 10am)

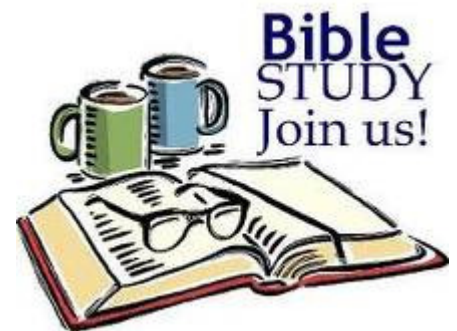


Friday Morning Ladies HOME Group

Next year the Friday morning Bible Study Group at St Matt's will commence on Friday 4 February.

They meet each Friday morning during term from 10.00 – 12.00 in Hall 3 for bible study and prayer.

New women are very welcome to come along and crèche will be available in 2011 for those with small children.



Join a 'Know Your Bible' Women's Group in 2011

In Term 1 we are studying the first part of the book of Isaiah.

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord.

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." *Isaiah 1:18*

Come and learn more about these verses in Isaiah on Wednesday nights 8:00-9:30pm in Hall 3 beginning Wednesday 9 February 2011.

Please talk to us if you want further details or to order a study book. All welcome.

Wendy (9484 2108); Pat (9868 4630).

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Unusual, ethical gifts as a practical response to global poverty.

You give the card as a Christmas gift and an international community also receives the gift of support for resources that help them to break free from poverty.

Available in the foyer after each church service on
5, 12 and 19 December



Exciting Ministry Opportunity in 2011

Join a dedicated team of volunteers!

Scripture (SRE) teachers and relief teachers needed at West Pennant Hills, Cherrybrook & John Purchase Public Schools.

Scripture (SRE) times are:

John Purchase PS on Tuesdays -

11:30 Infants; 12:00 Primary

Cherrybrook PS on Fridays -

10:30 Primary; 11:20 Infants

West Pennant Hills on Fridays -

9:00 Primary; 9:30 Infants

Teachers and relief teachers needed.

Speak to Jacki Hellstrom or Pat Sutton if you can help. 9479 3700

A Young Adult Bible Study Experience

7.15 pm - Tuesday Night. tired and cranky after a day at work, Julie and Dave grab bibles, etc, and race off to jump in the car... it's Young Adults Bible Study. It can't possibly be a whole week since last Tuesday, can it? Couldn't we just stay home for one Tuesday night?

7.31 pm - Tuesday Night. The group arrives close to time...it's amazing. Already we feel encouraged. Within the next minutes we are laughing our heads off, counting our blessings and are so glad to be there. What an extraordinary privilege it is to share in prayer and bible study with adults 25 years younger than us! They are warm, enthusiastic, knowledgeable yet enquiring, caring, committed and hilariously funny. Already our attitude has changed ... and we are feeling 20 years younger ourselves. This sure beats vitamin tablets and staying home on a Tuesday night.

There are several Young Adult Bible Study groups at St Matt's and this is just one of them. We meet weekly, though in August all the groups joined together for a month long Ethics series. Many also attended a weekend in the mountains for the "Engage" conference, specially catering for young adults. We enjoyed our weekend with them but are still coming to grips with everyone else reading the Bible on their iPhones, whilst we are searching for our glasses. The music was joyful and loud ... we can do LOUD!



It was quite a surprise that we found ourselves leading a Young Adult Bible Study group in 2010. It wasn't part of the plan, but sometimes God has other ideas and we are so very thankful. The energy of youth is such a blessing and we have absolutely LOVED joining them at 7pm church as well. It has all reminded us to really appreciate the 'younger generation' and not to hold on to the ways we do things but to be prepared to learn from them.

Meeting monthly with Nerida and a committed and enthusiastic team of Godly leaders has also been a wonderful experience. To our surprise we have been included by them and it is us (rather than the youngies) who have been most conscious of our age.

9.45 pm - Tuesday Night. We go home each week rating young Adult Bible Study as one of the best things we have done for years. Despite feeling totally out of our comfort zone and often ill-prepared, each week with our group is fabulous and we have not only ministered but have largely been ministered to. Meeting and growing with adults in the bumpy transition from school to work, seeking to know God deeply and honour him in their lives, has been enriching and encouraging for us.

Please pray for the young adult groups, the leaders and Nerida as she directs this important ministry at St Matts. God is good!

Dave and Julie (Rookie Young Adults!!)



Afternoon Kids Club

2011 is coming around very fast and we are looking to launch our new Kids Club on 4 February!

Why are we doing this?

We want to reflect the generosity of Christ to our community sharing our love of Jesus in a regular and exciting format. Reaching both children and their parents, thereby providing a simple transition through relationships from kids to youth activities.

Why Friday afternoons?

After speaking with parents from WPH school and young leaders who will be helping run the program, Friday afternoon is most likely to be free from sport training and definitely from the pressure of homework. It also provides a logical and more regular meeting time providing a stepping stone to YOUTH which is also on a Friday.

What time will it run?

We will be running from 3.30-5pm providing afternoon tea for the children followed by a rotation system of craft, games, talk and singing. Our first terms program is based on the 'Shrek - Forever After' movie, drawing out the similarities to Bible teaching from creation to living our lives as Christians. We want to make it relevant!

We ask that everyone gets behind this new venture. Pray for the children and families that will be sharing the afternoon with us. Pray for all those who are lending a hand, who are leading, for Rachel Dirks and myself as we lead the different age groups. Think about lending a hand yourself. We want to be showing '**generosity in and to our community**' by providing afternoon tea to these hungry school children.

If you are free on a Friday afternoon and think you could do some afternoon tea preparation please let myself or Rachel know.

Jackie Hellstrom



St Matts @ School

Connecting Encouraging Growing

As we come to the conclusion of 2010 many of us will be saying 'where did the year go?' I am happy to say, though the year like so many others seemed to zoom by, it was a year with many positives.

St Matt's celebrated the anniversary of the @ school congregation, marked by a visit from the Archbishop. The members, led by Steve Abbott and the core team of elders, did a great job of not just keeping the 'boat afloat' but continuing to run a great service and build community in the transition time between Adam Taylor's departure and my arrival. A number of our members were able to participate in connecting with and serving the school community by participating in P & C, working bees, teaching scripture and school events.

The year saw us continue to welcome new people into the gathering. The list could go on...

For 2011 we hope to see the congregation grow with increased membership in home groups, continued outreach, and continuing in helping everyone be a part of the every member ministry culture.

One of the most exciting things in the near future will be seeing a number of St Matts @ School members working together with members from other congregations to run the all new Matts4Kids afternoon club on Fridays.

Shane Dirks
Associate Minister



'Out of Africa' Report

Steve Abbott & Craig Reid

I am so very grateful for the opportunity to attend the Lausanne Congress for World Evangelisation in Cape Town and then to participate in the week long mission trip in Zimbabwe, where Craig, our part-time ministry trainee, joined me. This was my first trip to the African continent and in very different ways these two experiences allowed me to step back from focusing narrowly on St Matt's and look at the wider canvas of God's activity in the world today. I returned having been challenged, stretched, encouraged, stimulated and disturbed; no doubt you'll probably get sick of my sharing of stories so just get your violins out when this is the case and I'll bag my head. On 13 December, at St Matt's, Craig and I will present PowerPoint slides and maybe some short movie clips and share more extensively about our time. However here are one or two highlights and pictures:

• **Cape Town Lausanne Congress:** This third congress for world evangelisation was incredibly encouraging and the diversity of the world church is a joy to behold and experience. 4,200 participants met each day in table groups of six (see picture below) to discuss the Scriptures and various ministry issues. I shared my table with 5 ministers from Trinidad & Tobago, Ghana, Nigeria, Hong Kong and the USA it was a rich time. There were wonderful oral and visual presentations, moving testimonies and the singing & dancing was just great. My big reflection is that I was tremendously encouraged to see the hand of God growing his church in all the four corners of the globe from scholarly institutions in the West to the slums of India. Despite what we might feel when pleasure-seeking Aussies reject the gospel, God is on the move, building his church. Lausanne also reminded me of the challenge to work hard at getting the balance right between gospel preaching and meeting the real social needs of the people hearing the preaching.



- ♦ **Zimbabwe Short Term Mission with Living Word Ministries** – The Zivagwe family (see picture above) lead this ministry and they welcomed Craig and myself warmly. We were able to get some feel for their ministry in Harare in their depressed and poor suburban Mufakose Baptist Church where we preached and taught on the last Saturday and Sunday. The city is very run down and the first thing you really notice everywhere in the city and, I might add, the rural communities is that nearly everybody walks as there are so few people who can afford cars. Our rural trip took us about 25km beyond a town called Gokwe, which is close to the Zambian border in an area called Nenyunga. Here we stayed two nights and three days based in a family village, where I did a lot of teaching and preaching while Craig did an invaluable work in getting their Jesus Film equipment operating more safely and also spoke at two school assemblies (see picture). Reuben mentors four rural pastors (see picture), who serve the local villages and have no formal theological training and receive no money for their labours. Despite this they serve with enthusiasm and joy; it was a privilege to meet them.



Just one reflection: We have so much to learn from these wonderful Christian brothers and sisters whose joy in Christ is not obscured by wealth, prosperity and our many toys of entertainment. Their commitment and dedication is a great example to us and I'm the richer for being in their midst. I hope and pray that in 2011 we might be able to have another short-term mission trip with Living Word Ministries but this time with up to 16 people so that we can actually do more practical things to assist them.

ST MATT'S CHINESE CONGREGATION

A Testimony from our dear sister in Christ, Iri Zhai, who was baptized on 7 November 2010

Today is the day that I have been waiting and longing for, to be baptized into God's kingdom. I came to Australia in December 1989. I attended a church at Christmas which was one week after my arrival and came to know our creator God. Over the past 20 years, I have received numerous blessings from God. God has blessed me and my family with many great and unforgettable blessings. God has led me through difficult journeys in life. Time and time again God brought me out of darkness into the wonderful light. Even though I have enjoyed his abundant love, I did not grow in my spiritual life. My sinful nature puts me into a habit of glorifying myself. I thought God loves me because I am a good person and I work hard. God utilizes the bible, the wonderful and beautiful creation to reveal his mystery to mankind. However, my pride stopped me from coming to grips with his revelation. I used the knowledge and philosophy that I have learnt from my past as the standard to judge things. I thought that the bible would be similar to other philosophy and classical literature, that it would be boring to read the bible. I did not realize that it was because of my pride that stopped me from reading the bible. I thought I was smart and knew everything. As human beings, we are used to overestimate our own ability and underestimate God's standard.

I thank God for his mercy, compassion and everlasting love. God did not abandon me. In March this year, God led me to St Matthews. I was touched by the Holy Spirit when I visited the church. My heart was deeply touched. God knows my needs more than me. I listened to the teaching of God's word and started to open the bible. God's way is higher than our way. Day by day I was drawn to the teaching in the bible. This is because there were many questions regarding life that I could not answer. After this, I suddenly got a very strong and strange feeling that I did not understand myself. Since then our creator God explains to me how insignificant and weak is humanity, how narrow minded and helpless is man and woman. Our feet cannot walk even one corner of the earth. I knew so little and had made so many mistakes in my brief life. But God gave me the longing to grow and I reflected in His word. I realize God stops those who are proud and blesses those who are humbled. Jesus is the only Lord and Saviour who can save us and grant us a new life.

God said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3). God also said, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21).



以下是我們親愛的Iri Zhai姊妹在7/11/2010的洗禮見証

接受神洗礼的这一天是我渴慕和期待已久的时刻。1989年12月我来到澳洲，一个星期之后的圣诞节我来到教堂，认识了我们的神，在此后20年的时间，我无数次蒙神恩典，神也赐予我和我的家庭那种很大的甚至是刻骨铭心的恩惠。神带领我走过荆棘地，一次次将我从黑暗引向光明。然而，在漫长的岁月里我享受神的爱，属灵的生命却从没有成长。被罪捆绑的心总是习惯将荣耀归于自己，我觉得神爱我因为我是好人，我很努力。神以圣经和广袤，神奇，无以伦比之美妙的大自然启示人类，但是，我与生俱来高傲的内心是没有悟性去领会这种启示，根深蒂固的思想让我以过去所接受的知识和理论作为衡量和检验事物的标准，我想像和以为：《圣经》是与其他哲学著作或古典文学作品类似，可能索然寡味。我并不察觉这种骄傲和自以为是，以为我有足够的智慧。人类总是习惯高估自己的水平，而低估神的标准。

感谢神，我们的主耶稣他的怜悯，宽容和忍耐是长远的，他的爱直到永久，他从没有离开我。

今年3月神亲自引领和安排我来到这间教会。第一次来到这里即被圣灵感动，内心百感交集。他知道我的需要更胜过我自己。在这里我聆听神的教诲，开始翻开圣经。神的意念永远是人所不能测度的，一天更胜一天我被圣经所吸引，因为他拥有使我困惑长久而不得其解，关于生命的答案。此后的一天我忽然产生一个很强很奇怪的感觉，我觉得我并不了解我自己了。从那时开始，创造宇宙万物的神开始为我解释人的渺小与软弱，人的狭窄眼界和无能为力。我们的双脚甚至不能走完世界任何一个角落，我生命过去几十年的认知如此微不足道而存谬误。神也同时赐予我反省和渴望成长的心情。我真实感觉到神阻挡高傲的人，赐福于卑微的心。主耶稣是唯一能拯救我们，使我们获得新生命的救主。

神说：“虚心的人有福了，因为天国是他们的”，神又说：“世人凭自己的智慧，即不认识神，神就乐于用人所当作愚蠢的道理，拯救那些信的人，这就是神的智慧了”

当我仰望神的时候，我的心充实而宁静，神爱我而管教我，神为给我新的灵魂而雕刻我塑造我，求神你充满我的心，让我生活在光明里。也让更多的生命听到你的福音，感受到你的恩典同在



HOME GROUP FOCUS

Tuesday Women's Bible Study

**Meets weekly during term time,
7:45 p.m. supper for 8pm start
Hall 1, St. Matt's**



Tuesday nights are one of our favourite nights of the week – undistracted time to pray and enjoy fellowship with Christian sisters, and to grapple with putting God's Word into practice. There are now about 20 women who meet for coffee and supper, and then break into 2 smaller groups for Bible study and prayer. The group is unique with its diversity in age and length of time as a Christian. Also women exploring Christ for the first time are welcome and feel comfortable in asking questions.

Although it would be nice to meet in someone's home, we are keen to keep meeting in Hall 1 in the church building, so that we can be flexible and have room to grow.

This year we had noticed that for many of us it's a struggle to develop our own personal quiet time alone with God, so we have tried some different things:

- ♦ we read the book of James together using the same basic framework each week (the SOAP model – Scripture, Observe, Apply, Pray), instead of set Bible study questions. This helped us all become more confident in our own ability to read Scripture for ourselves, trusting in the Holy Spirit to help us.
- ♦ we also used Matthias Media's *The Daily Reading Bible* notes to help guide our reading of John's gospel, and we encouraged each other to read several readings at home before the next week's Bible Study.
- ♦ In an effort to increase our pastoral care for each other and to hold each other accountable, we formed "prayer squares" within our Bible study groups – these are made up of 4 women who consistently pray with each other each Tuesday night, and who care for/email prayer points and check on each other at a more open and intimate level. We have all loved and valued these deeper prayer relationships, and plan to keep them going next year.

It's wonderful to be part of this group, made up of both 9am and 10am women, as we share our lives with each other and encourage each other to keep following Jesus.

Please pray for more wisdom in planning for next year, and that more Bible study leaders will be raised up and trained in leading groups.

Our group is always open to anyone who might wish to join – please contact Ruth (9980 9914) or Jenny (9980 5252) if you are interested.

60 Seconds with a Staff Member

Name – Nerida Peart.

Family – I have two older siblings, and 5 nieces and nephews ranging from 1 to 7. My nieces and nephews are a constant source of delight, and I am looking forward to having both my brother and sister living in Sydney in 2011 – the first time we have all lived in Sydney at the same time. I live in Thornleigh with 3 flatmates, in a large house. It is a companionable and busy household with all of us travelling for work and study.



Found Jesus – My parents became Christians through John Chapman and their time as Uni Students at UNE. This meant that we were brought up in an evangelical household – although growing up in a country church was not the same as being part of St Matt's Youth Group! When I came to university I joined a university church, and it was there that my faith grew, matured and flourished.

Work – I did a Media studies and Law degree at Macquarie University, and then went on to work at Mallesons as a corporate lawyer for a number of years. Although corporate law was not a natural fit, it exposed me to a part of the world that I would otherwise not have known about, and certainly taught me how to problem solve and work hard!

Hobbies – I have a keen interest in overseas travel, and love discovering new places. I have a geography party trick and know all the capitals of the world – you can test me! I also love playing team sports, particularly soccer and hockey. I enjoy reading – particularly novels, and also music and going to concerts.

Fellowship – Here at St Matt's, and mainly at both the 10am and the 7pm.

Words of Encouragement – I love the promise at the end of Romans 8:35-38 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: *"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."* No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.^{V38} *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

KID'S FUN PUZZLE

Alphabet Soup

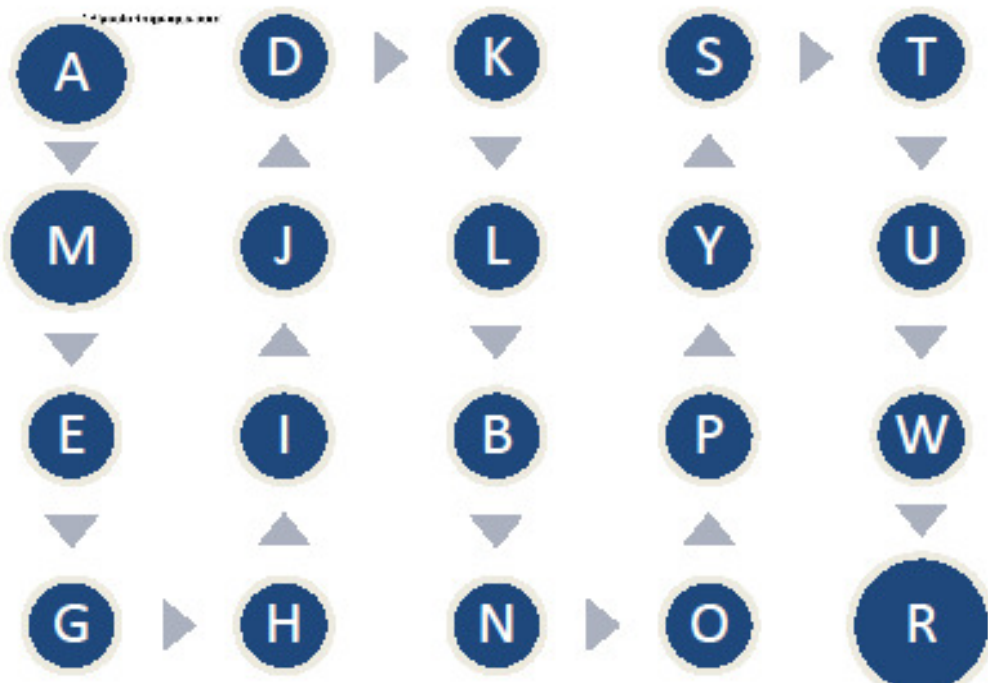
All these letters below have fallen out of these Christmas names and words. Can you put them all back correctly? Cross the letters off as you go. The pictures give you some clues.



J _ SE _ _
_ A _ Y
_ ON _ EY
MA _ _ ER



BA _ _ _ ES _ S
_ NGE _ S
_ _ SE M _ N
_ _ ARS





Bring the whole family to get into the Christmas spirit this year with Carols, brought to you by St Matt's Anglican Church. The evening will be narrated by Stephen O'Doherty, former 2GB host, TV presenter and politician.

Activities for the Kids include face painting, jumping castles, snack stalls, glow sticks, live camels and heaps more!

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

**Friday 17 December
5.30pm Family Festival,
followed by the Carols at 7.30pm
West Pennant Hills Public School Oval**

This event is proudly sponsored by



Scripture in Primary Schools 2010

- The week beginning 29 November was the last week of scripture in our Primary Schools. Each school concluded the year with an assembly – John Purchase PS on Tuesday 30th and West Pennant Hills PS and Cherrybrook PS on Friday 3rd.
- Thanks and Praise to God that the real message of Christmas was proclaimed at each of these assemblies.
- Our team of 23 regular teachers, 5 helpers and 5 relief teachers from St Matt's and Cherrybrook Anglican Church have taught approx 550 children in 27 classes across the three schools.
- Several of the team will not be returning in the new year. We give thanks for their faithful service. Special thanks to Alan who is retiring after 26 years teaching scripture.
- Please pray that vacancies will be filled in 2011.

ST MATTS MISSION UPDATE

DECEMBER 2010

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

Pray for organising ongoing mission opportunities in St Matthews now and in the future!

5th December - Daniel & Dominica Lai, WYCLIFFE

- Daniel and Dominica will lead several discovery teams to visit Africa in December. Please pray for the ministry and partnership opportunities, safety and journeying mercy.
- Praise for Nathaniel's completion of second year of Engineering Studies at UNSW. Pray for provision of a summer job for industrial training from Dec-Feb. Pray for safety in driving with his provisional driving license.
- Pray for Hannah to be accepted into a Sydney university in 2011, as well as the provision of a temporary part time job. Pray for safety in driving with a learner's license. She turns 19 on Dec 22.
- Continue to pray for Dominica's mum and her daily dialysis in Sydney. Dominica's sister Margaret is currently looking after her in Dominica's absence.
- Daniel's parents' Hong Kong apartment has been bought by a developer. Pray for their good health, and that Daniel and his siblings can find another suitable flat for their parents to live in.



19th December - Chris & Sharon Ekins, CEC Forster

- Praise God for answering prayers regarding scripture! We will begin teaching yr 7 students at Great Lakes College in Forster in 2011.
- Pray for many to attend a short course explaining the Christian faith (24 Nov-15 Dec)
- Pray for Chris as he identifies and trains new bible study leaders so our home groups can grow.
- Praise God for people's generosity! We are successfully 50% self-funded as a church, and 50% externally funded. Pray we can soon be 100% internally funded and be able to give to others.
- Praise God for the faithful and hard work of Alicia and Evan with youth ministry. Pray as she begins her theological education in 2011 by correspondence so she can still be part of CoastEC.
- Please pray for the Beach Mission (Dec 26 - Jan 6) and Solid Rock Cafe (6-16 Jan) to connect well with tourists and locals - for many to come to Christ, and for good partnership with the mission teams and local churches (and effective follow-up).



12th December - Scripture Teachers Cherrybrook, John Purchase & WPH

- Give thanks for the opportunity to present the Christmas message at the end of year assemblies at each of the schools.
- Praise for the faithful years of service of Alan Hindley and Robyn Cosier who are retiring this year. Praise also for all the other teachers who continue to serve at our local schools (WPH, Cherrybrook and John Purchase).
- Thank God for Jackie France's service and willingness to be on the relief teaching list in 2011.
- Please pray for the provision of new people to come forward to teach, be trained or to assist. Seven new people would be ideal for 2011.
- Pray that scripture teachers and helpers will enjoy a restful break over the holiday season.

****If you would like to volunteer to teach or assist with scripture in 2011, please contact Jacki Hellstrom or Pat Sutton, they would love to hear from you!*

ST MATTS MISSION UPDATE

JANUARY 2011

2nd January - Ian & Ruth Batey, CMS Spain

- Please pray for our Christmas ministries at church—church services, the youth putting on a play. Pray it will go smoothly and invitations will be accepted. Pray we will be able to follow up visitors well.
- Please continue to remember Samuel, Emma and William. Give thanks that they're content to go to school each day. Pray for Samuel to stay on top of his work, and William to continue to develop confidence in speaking Spanish.
- Pray for Ruth as she attends classes and continues to improve her Spanish.
- Pray for Ian as he develops resources for training and evangelism, and continues to meet with church members. Please keep praying for his Spanish to improve so he can minister more effectively and work more efficiently.
- Pray as we begin to make preparations for our first home assignment in the second half of 2011.



9th January - Morgan & Anna Powell, SIM Ecuador

- Give thanks for our third annual preaching conference in October; an excellent week of learning, fellowship and encouragement for all attendees.
- Pray for the courses starting up on preaching and basic biblical Greek. Our aim is to make these regular fixtures providing teaching on topics that will benefit local believers and leaders.
- Continue to pray for those we meet with one-on-one, that we will make the most of our time and others will invest in their lives while we are in Australia. These people are Susi (young Christian), Patricia (became a Christian last year), Diego (youth leader), Luis (Baptist Pastor), Juan Carlos (seeking) and Fabricio (struggling in his faith).
- Pray as we need to pass on our roles with SIM as we leave in February. Pray for a good transition for both the SIM team and us as we pack and say farewells and head back to Sydney in 2011.
- Continue to pray for Anika and us as parents.



16th January - Grace & William Eyika, Dagoretti Corner Baptist Church, Kenya

- Praise for a successful visit to Australia recently and the launch of our book.
- Thank God for Lydia's recovery from the accident and she is now back at work.
- Thanks for the imminent completion of our house before the end of the year; pray this will be satisfactory.
- Praise for the successful completion of the Kenya Cert. of Secondary Education and Primary Education Exams.
- Pray for peace in Kenya as the International Criminal Court is about the commence controversial prosecutions of prominent people for their roles in post-election violence in 2008. Pray for safety for all of us amongst the many dangers of Nairobi.
- Pray for provision of suitable land for the relocation of our facilities.



23rd January - PHCCEA Grant Howard, Peter Murphy and Graham Castle

- While school holidays are a time of rest for teachers and students, please also pray that the three Christian Studies teachers would also enjoy a restful break.
- Please pray for planning and preparation by the Christian Studies teachers for the new 2011 school year, particularly in the area of using school technology at both schools. Give thanks for Mrs Jenny Gibbs, of St Matt's, who provides professional support and guidance to the Christian Studies teachers on a regular basis.
- Please pray especially for the new Year 7's, commencing high school at the end of the month, at both high schools, that they will settle well into their Christian Studies classes.



30th January - Jenny Fallon, SIM Sydney

- Give thanks for Jenny's new PA, Sharon, with her gifts and heart to serve.
- Praise for an increase in applicants for mission service and greater capacity on the part of SIM home staff to journey well with these people.
- Pray that SIM Australia leadership team will be wise, adaptable and united as they face changes.
- Pray for increasing financial support for some SIM home staff with a significant shortfall.
- Thank God for many enjoyable times Jenny's had leading English classes at her local Campsie church. Pray that these students will continue to read the bible and God will open their hearts.
- Pray that many newcomers of varying nationalities will continue coming to Campsie church, finding friendship, community and most importantly the love of Christ. Pray Jenny will actively seek opportunities to serve.



ST MATTS MISSION UPDATE

MISSION EVENTS IN AND AROUND ST MATTS :

MISSION PRAYER MEETING

Wednesday 1st December, 7.30pm in New Line Cottage.

Next meeting will be: Wednesday 5th January, 7.30pm 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)



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)



Summer School
8-14 January 2011

Keeping Christ at the centre

**Registration is
open now for CMS
Summer School!**



All welcome, kids program available (pre-school up to year 12).
See their website to register or for more information.

<http://www.cms.org.au/nswsummerschool>

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. —2 Timothy 2:15