

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the Seacliff church; congregation, elders.
- Praise God that the Word became flesh; pray that this message will come home to many during December.
- Pray for all those affected by the tornado in the Philippines.
- Pray that your own, neighbouring and all Presbyterian churches will be focused on mission to a dying world and not just maintenance of our institutions.
- Uphold in prayer David & Gae McDonald, Flynn Patrol, PIM.
- Uphold in prayer APWM national office: Kevin Murray (National Director).
- Intercede for the Federal Government; Prime Minister Tony Abbott; Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten.
- Pray for the Presbytery of Torrens; clerk John Prattis.
- Planning and preparation for the Ladies Weekender being held at Karnkendi, Nelson in March.
- For the children who will receive the Christmas Boxes being distributed by Samaritan's Purse.
- Uphold in prayer your parliamentary representatives, federal and state.
- Pray for safety and spiritual refreshment for all those on holidays.
- Pray for the planning and preparation of the Holiday Muster being held at Mount Gambier in January.
- Pray for Christians throughout the Middle East.
- Pray for Christians to have a spirit of forgiveness and love towards those who are perceived as being our enemies.
- Pray for the Naracoorte Church; congregation, elders; Stefan & Sue Slucki.
- Pray for many people to become and grow as Christians through PIM patrols.
- Pray for the Presbytery of Penola; clerk Gary Ware.
- For God to reveal Christ's grace and truth to many living under the darkness of Islam.
- Pray for the towns and cities of South Australia, for the people in them who do not know Christ, including unsaved family members, friends and work colleagues.
- Persecuted Christians throughout the world.
- Pray for a Godly vision for your parish for 2014.

Editor's Note

Thank you to all who have contributed items for this issue of SA News they are all very much appreciated. May you all have a joyous and blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. Contributions for the March 2014 issue are to be in my hands **no later than 5.00pm**

Monday 10 February 2014.

Email: pcsanews@bigpond.com

SA News is a publication of the Theological & Christian Education Committee of The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Inc.



SA News

Issue 21

December 2013

Newsletter of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia



New Covenant Sabbath

The Kingdom of Israel was destroyed because they failed to keep the Sabbath (Leviticus 26:34-35). Western civilisation will be destroyed by the exact same thing but for a very different reason.

Like marriage, the Sabbath was instituted by God before the fall. So it follows that human beings, generally speaking, are created to do ordinary

labour for six days and to set the seventh day apart for being refreshed and renewed by enjoying God through worship and fellowship with His people.

Under the Old Covenant, Sabbath, like marriage, was legislated. What is often wrongly assumed however, is that Sabbath passed away when Jesus died for our sins and rose again for our justification. Sure, the Old Covenant Laws are fulfilled, but if you want to abolish Sabbath, there is no reason why marriage should not also go with it. The question is, how does Sabbath work under the New Covenant?

Sabbath is a gift of purest grace: it is time given by God to be built into our lives, set apart for fresh communion with Him so that our souls might be restored and our strength might be renewed. Sabbath can be practiced in solitude, and it is practiced as a community when we gather as a family around our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since the earliest days of the church, the first day of the week has been set apart for Sabbath: for rest, quietness, meditation and worship. We are living in a time however, when most Christians consider 1-2 hours out of each 168 hour week sufficient for fellowship and worship. Yet God has hardwired us at creation to require 24 hours. Is it any wonder that we are worn out?

Under the Old Covenant, the reason why God commanded that the Sabbath be observed was because He was the creator (Exodus 20:11) and redeemer (Deuteronomy 5:15) of His people. Under the New Covenant, the practice of Sabbath may be different, but the focus of it is still our relationship with God.

If "what is and is not permitted" is the focus of your Sabbath observance, it will not restore your soul, it will cripple it. If the expectations of other people are your focus, Sabbath will drain your strength rather than renew it.

We are to observe Sabbath as God intended us to observe it.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Some suggestions for taking your Sabbath

1. God and your relationship with Him as your Creator and Redeemer is to be your focus. Watching a movie is a good way to chill, but it is not Sabbath rest. It won't restore your soul. Spending the day with your family is time well spent, but it is not Sabbath rest. It will not renew your strength. Father, Son and Holy Spirit must be the focus of whatever you do.
 2. Take one full day each week – not a couple of hours, not half a day – one full day. Have faith in God that He will be able to keep the world from falling apart if you take a day off. Sunday is the best day for this because you can spend a good part of it with your brothers and sisters in Christ, serving and be served, praising God and receiving His grace. That being said, Sabbath is not restricted to Sunday – or any other day for that matter.
 3. Engage yourself in an activity that helps your heart and mind to focus upon Who God is, what He has done, what He is doing, and where He is leading you. Here are some suggestions:
 - Find a quiet place that is conducive to prayer & bible reading. Don't stay at home.
 - Read a good Christian book that stimulates your mind and ask God to help you understand more about Who He is and what He is like.
 - Take time to enjoy a cup of good coffee or a delicious meal and give thanks to God for it, praising Him for inventing the senses of taste and smell.
 - Spend your day in the garden doing the first job that God gave man to do (Genesis 2:8, 15). Enjoy being actively involved in what God is doing, giving growth to the plants in your garden. Watch the cycles of life, death and renewal and consider how God uses the gospel to order the seasons of your life.
 - Hike to a particular destination, and allow God to breathe meaning into it by prayerfully considering the pilgrimage of life that you are on as a follower of Jesus.
- If our purpose in life is to glorify and enjoy God, why are we not seizing Sabbath with both hands? Unbelievers don't know about the restoration and renewal that comes from Sabbath, and our 24/7 lifestyle is destroying Western civilisation. Shame on us if we fail to receive God's gift of Sabbath and are exhausted and broken with them.

Damien Carson

Whyalla

Due to a number of difficulties it was decided to terminate the use of the Church Hall by several of the community organisations. The cost to the church was too much to allow the use of the hall to continue.

During the period since the last newsletter one of our older members passed away. Edwin Gebbie had been in a nursing home and had declined in health in recent years. He passed to glory only a few weeks after receiving his letter from H.M. The Queen. The Service was conducted at the church by Mrs. Mashford, assisted by the Elders, with the ladies providing food and refreshments for the family and others attending the funeral.

On Saturday 12 October the ladies of the PWA took part in the annual Whyalla Pride Week. This is a week long celebration and highlighting of what is good about Whyalla, culminating in a Market and Fair at Civic Park. The ladies ran a trading table selling cakes and craft and also providing tea and coffee.

On Sunday 13 October we were pleased to host our Moderator, the Rev. Chris ten Broeke. This was a Communion Service, followed by a light lunch in the hall. The congregation were delighted to share and have fellowship with our Moderator, who had taken time out of his training at Cultana Army Training Base.

On Sunday 27 October the Whyalla PWA celebrated its 34th Anniversary. Ladies groups from various churches throughout Whyalla were invited to join the celebrations and nearly 40 ladies from various churches in Whyalla took up the invitation. The Ladies of the PWA conducted the Service. The guest speaker was Sister Cheryl Thomson, from the Catholic Church, who spoke on the theme: "Love your God with all your heart and Love your neighbour as yourself" At the light lunch which followed, Sister Cheryl was invited to cut the Anniversary Cake.

Under the authority of the Moderator our three elders continue to lead the service each week. The congregation remains in good heart as it continues to serve and worship God, and His Son, Our Lord, in this place.

On behalf of the Moderator, Session and Congregation, we wish all our friends and members of the Presbyterian family a Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Blessed and Prosperous journey into 2014.

Jessie Mitchell



Wattle Range

Attendances have improved over the last couple of months and the coffee and chat after services has been well supported and provides fellowship among the congregation.

Shedmen have met each month and these evenings provide fellowship, devotions and discussion for them, and some who don't attend regular worship.

The Annual PWA Thanksgiving Service was held in Naracoorte in August, with 6 Penola ladies attending. Rev Stefan Slucki led the Worship service and Communion and was also the guest speaker in the afternoon. Stefan gave an extremely interesting talk about his life and about how to read on a Braille machine.

In September the Penola Pastoral School Support Worker, John Stayte, and the Committee arranged morning teas at the High and Primary Schools to meet and thank the Staff for their continued support and service.

In October PWA members met at the Church, motored down to the Bookmark Cafe at the Mount Gambier library for lunch then visited the beautiful garden at Yahl owned by Erica Smith.

Since our last report, we have had three more funerals in our Church and the ladies have catered for 2 of them. We were saddened by the deaths of Stuart Balnaves, aged 92, who died in August, Mary Kuhl who died in September and Bevan Phillips, aged 87, who died on 1 October. Also Colin Ross-Smith, aged 85, who died on 22 October, was an Elder for 25 years. His funeral was held in Adelaide on 26 October. There is going to be a Memorial Service for Colin in our Church on 9 November, with the ladies catering for a light lunch after.

Barbara Provis

Breaking the Bible Famine in Africa

A famine is sweeping across the African continent that does not have its origins in climate change, political upheaval or war. This famine goes much deeper than physical, political or social needs – it goes to the very heart and soul of every man, woman and child - it is a Bible famine.

There is a deep spiritual hunger for the Word of God across Africa. The population of Africa is growing faster than in any other part of the world. With more than one billion people in 2010 it is estimated that the population will grow to 1.5 billion by 2030.

Almost half of the people living in this culturally and ethnically diverse continent claim to be Christian but often their depth of faith is very shallow because they do not have a personal copy of the Bible in their heart language...

As the Church in Africa continues to grow rapidly, reaching out into unchurched areas with the Good News of Jesus, so does the demand for Bibles and Bible study resources

— www.bibleleague.com.au

The important message of Christmas

David Cook

Moderator General, Presbyterian Church of Australia.



A few statistics published recently disturb me:

- Australia is second only to Switzerland as the nation people are most fortunate to be born into and live in.
- Australia is second only to Switzerland in terms of high life expectancy.

- Australia is the wealthiest nation on earth, mean worth of each of us is USD219,505 and 5% of us are millionaires.

- The fifth highest cause of death in Australia, after heart disease, stroke, lung and bowel cancer is self harm, prevalent especially among 19 – 26 year olds.

Why, when we live in what is virtually paradise on earth?

It was the French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal who said that inside each of us is a God-shaped vacuum and try as we might to fill it, only God can fill that space.

Christmas is all about Jesus' entrance into this world. In John 14:6 in response to Thomas' gloomy question, Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life no one comes to the Father except by me".

This is surely an arrogant claim, unless of course, it is true.

At Christmas we remember that the one who is the way to God has come; the one who reveals all the truth we need to know about God has come; the one who is the source of life itself has come. There is a way to God, there is truth and real life available in Jesus. The apostles always declared that there is only one way to God. Saul went to Damascus to persecute followers of the Way, not a way.

Of course other religions make exclusive claims, so what is so special about Jesus' claim? Jesus' claim is unique because it is backed by his death and his resurrection, better attested by ancient manuscripts, than any other ancient events. No other religious leader has risen from death, thus Jesus uniquely authenticates his claims: The way. The truth. The life.

This Christmas think about C S Lewis' challenge:

If Christianity is untrue, it is unimportant.

If Christianity is true, it is infinitely important.

The only thing Christianity cannot be, is moderately important.

Jesus says he is the only way, the exclusive truth and the sole source of life. Since that is true, the most loving thing we can do is to declare it and warn others that they are on a path which is a dead end street, leading to disappointment and catastrophe.

On 3 January 2014, as a member of the SCG I will get up at 5 am, queue up at the members gate at 6 am and then run from the gate, in what is called the

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

“Paddington gift” to secure my seat for the day, in the Members’ Stand. I will try to reserve the seat next to me for a friend. He will get up at about 9:30 am, wander into the ground at 10:30 for the start of play, secure in the fact that I have reserved a seat for him. I pay the member’s subscription, I get up at 5 am, queue at 6 am, race at 7 am, I do all the work, he wanders in and enjoys the fruit of my labours.

That’s what makes Christianity so unique. All religions tell you to line up, join the queue, run the race, do your best, but you will never be sure you have done enough. If you get a seat in heaven or paradise it reflects well on you.

Jesus came into the world, to live perfectly, die substitutionally and rise bodily, and he says:

“in my Fathers house are many seats, I have reserved one for you” (John 14:2).

Jesus came at Christmas to win a place for you at God’s family table, your being there will reflect well on him. Jesus asks you what he asked Philip – do you believe this? (John 14:10). Then he tells Philip the basis of such belief, it is the words of Jesus, or believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves (John 14:11).

Do you believe that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life? Believe on the basis of his words or his works, on the basis of his resurrection itself.

Mount Gambier

The culmination of another twelve months of work came to fruition on Thursday, 19 September, when 172 Samaritan’s Purse Christmas Boxes were sent off to our local collation centre before being sent on to Adelaide, where they will then depart for various international destinations.

A big thank you to our Care & Concern / Coffee & Craft Group who coordinate this very special activity.

Gary Ware



Job well done: Doug, Jean, Yvonne, Wendy and Heather



172 boxes ready to go

Mount Barker

How does the Lord encourage us? Some have asked this in recent times? The Lord has been doing a really great work among us, we know this and are sure of it. *How is it seen?* We know the Scriptures are the word of Him who loves us and speaks to us. (2 Peter 1) We know God disciplines His children and loves to give them fruit in due season. (Hebrews. 12) We know seeing one life changed helps us see that He works miracles among us and we are on His side (Luke 15 & Mark 9:40).



Mount Barker recently held a concert with the Korean Presbyterian Church of Adelaide. We see the Lord working through others and they come and share their gifts and love of God with us. The young people shared some songs and demonstrated



that the Lord can bring change in a person’s life through a great skit often performed overseas. The light of the gospel shone through the Choir’s wonderful harmony of voices giving glory to the Lord. This must be the third time we have hosted the Choir and our gospel partnership with this mission based Church continues to grow stronger.



John Hutchinson speaking at our Breakfast for Blokes on October 19.

Our Breakfast for Blokes has been in recess for several months. We recommitted to it in October when we hosted John Hutchinson a shearer of sheep. *Can a person who becomes a top shearer of sheep and training of sheep shearers impart any wisdom or insights about God?* Absolutely! John gave some great insights on how we often will not see till later, the Lord working through all sorts of

circumstances. Yet if we seek to always serve Him and we desire only His glory, He does all sorts of miracles. John, through his talk, showed what many would call remarkable coincidences. Impossible changes from a human perspective that show the work of God and that brings glory to His name.

As we look forward again in a few weeks, celebrating that incredible event of the incarnation; as we bow with humility before Him who redeemed us from ‘the curse’ (Galatians 3:13), may you be encouraged to shine for His glory. The grace and love of God be with you.

Robert Finster

The Gospel flames are needed for Open Doors of Ministry

In thinking about ministry here in SA...in the relatively few ministries we have across this great State...perhaps one thing that we need to do is to acknowledge that we need to see a work of God in our area. Our church buildings have doors that remain 'open' for all to enter every week. And yet one wonders whether an 'open door' for effective ministry exists. Or to put it another way, "Are our communities as open to the gospel as our church doors are?"

We may have 'open doors' on our church buildings but that doesn't guarantee that such openness exists in the communities we serve. This is evidenced by the fact that so few attend services in comparison with the population of our communities. And yet the danger remains that we assume that because our church buildings are open...that the communities surrounding us are open to the gospel as well. But the lack of responsiveness to the gospel says otherwise.

Another way this is seen is when we are asked to have funeral services for someone who is not a member of any of our churches. As ministers we do everything we can to assist the grieving family regardless of whether a person was a member of our church or not. But our openness to help care for the family does not mean that people who attend such services are always open to the gospel. It often means that they have come to simply farewell their friend by being present at a 'proper funeral.'

This is demonstrated by the fact that our buildings can be overflowing as the community comes to a funeral and then be relatively empty a few days later for a Sunday Worship Service. There are always wonderful exceptions where someone has truly been touched with the gospel at a funeral service...but by and large most people who attend a funeral will not be back at that church building until they return to attend another funeral for a friend or loved one.

Our church doors need to be open for people to hear the gospel...even at funerals...but we must not assume that our communities are open to the gospel just because our church doors are open. We need to pray that God will open hearts for effective ministry and that the flames of the gospel will spread throughout our community for our having done so.

The apostle Paul consistently asked the brethren to pray that God would open the door for effective ministry. "But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged, so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you" (2 Corinthians 10:15-16). "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4:3). "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honoured, as happened among you" (2 Thessalonians 3:1).

As a minister I always want to be available to help people during their time of loss. But I long for the day when we shall also be having the privilege of helping people discover the gain they can have in Christ...even in the dark days of loss (2 Corinthians 1:3-5; Philippians 1:21). May God make it so in our days.

Don Broadwater.

Barnabas helping Christian children in Syria as rebels attack schools

As rebel attacks on Christian schools in Syria claim the lives of five youngsters, Barnabas Fund is helping thousands of vulnerable Christian children caught up in the merciless conflict.

Two Christian schools in Damascus were hit in mortar strikes on Monday 11 November. A shell struck a school bus in front of Risaleh School in the predominantly Christian area of Bab Sharqi, killing four children and the driver. A fifth pupil succumbed to injuries the following day.

The nearby school, St John of Damascus, was also hit, causing injuries to around ten pupils.

UNICEF called the shelling "barbaric", saying that "all those with influence in Syria have a moral obligation to respect the sanctity of children's lives and ensure that schools remain a place of safe refuge".

The attacks have left parents afraid to send their children to school.

Rebel fighters have been targeting Christian areas of the capital with indiscriminate shelling. Residents of Qassa say that it is hit with at least 15 mortar rounds every Sunday.

Children living in this brutal war zone are experiencing horrors to which no young life should be exposed, causing them to have nightmares and become mentally disturbed.

Barnabas Fund is therefore training church and youth leaders in trauma counselling to help children, teenagers and families overcome the damaging psychological effects. Last month, the first workshop for 38 Christian leaders from Syria took place in Lebanon. One of the participants said:

This workshop gave me the motivation to go on, and empowered my self-confidence, enriched my knowledge and skills... I will be able to face the problems and the special cases with more strength and bigger confidence. I am now ready to help traumatised children.



Barnabas is helping to meet children's physical and psychological needs

We are also helping to meet the physical needs of Christian children, who are suffering great hardships as a result of displacement and scarcity. Many are suffering from malnutrition, and, as winter starts to bite, they are especially vulnerable to illness and even death.

As well as providing around 7,500 Christian families with food and other basic needs every month, we are giving extra support to the most vulnerable, including at least 278 Christian children who have seen one or more parents killed or kidnapped; we have also supplied milk powder for 200 under-tuos in Wadi al-Nasara ("The Valley of the Christians").

And in Aleppo, where winter has come early and a lack of electricity and other fuel means that there is absolutely no heating, we have recently supplied 1,881 Christian children with warm coats.

<http://barnabasfund.org/AU/News/Latest-emergencies/Barnabas-helping-Christian-children-in-Syria-as-rebels-attack-schools.html>

Mount Gambier

Each year our Care & Concern committee hosts a morning tea to thank those who attend our Coffee & Craft mornings, along with an extended group who don't come along on Wednesday mornings but who make various contributions of knitted items, Christmas boxes, and finances throughout the year. All of the items produced are given away in our local community, along with the Women's And Children's Hospital in Adelaide and APWM in Sydney. We're encouraged by such practical generosity, and hope that the people who receive these gifts gain some insight into God's care and love.



Knitted Items and Christmas Box



Knee Rugs and Knitted Items



One of two Morning Tea Tables



Lots of Chat

CALLING ALL WOMEN - KEEP THESE DATES FREE

2014 Ladies Weekender

Friday 14 - Sunday 16

March 2014

At Karnkendi

Come along for a weekend of teaching, fellowship, fun and relaxation

For more information contact: Vivienne Peate 0438 608 651

Naracoorte

Our Church calendar seems to be filling up - Stefan is keeping us busy!! The Men's Breakfast sessions have been great for the gathering of male members of our parish on a more regular basis. In September Tom Loechel, one of our staunch members, spoke about he & his wife Wendy's trip to the Middle East earlier in the year. They visited Israel, Jordan and Egypt. Tom highlighted the 'lived experience' referring to such things as the narrowness of some ancient parts of Jerusalem, the hospitable kindness of residents and the traffic-throngs in the area.

Another breakfast was held in October as the Bible Society arranged a weekend of activities within Naracoorte. Men from other Churches in Naracoorte were invited to attend.

Yet another breakfast meeting will be held on Saturday, 3rd November and this time it will be open to all members & friends. Mr David d'Lima from Family Voice Australia will address those present. He is known to speak about a variety of issues from a Christian perspective.

Our Annual PWA Morning Tea was held in September too. Although attendance was down a little there was a great feeling of fellowship. We especially appreciate the loyal support of Church women from other denominations within our town. It is a good time of fun and fellowship.

In early October the fledgling Korean congregation held an outreach activity, inviting fellow Korean-speaking workers at the local meat-works to attend a BBQ featuring popular Korean dishes like Kimchi, Bul Gogi and Jabche. Some 40 people came.

Elder-Emeritus, Ian Hutchison, celebrated his 90th birthday with many members of the wider family at Naracoorte on 27 October. His wife, Enid, reached the milestone earlier in the year.

Julie McLean



Korean Congregation BBQ