

BAPTISTS

Fund raising for the Drop In Centre

CHRISTMAS IS a time when people are often very aware of whether they have a community around them or not. Over the years, we have tried in different ways to provide a family like setting for people to share with us, but without great success.



Silver Street Baptist Mission is raising funds. Here's how you can help...

We are raising as much as we can to support our fundraising. You can help us by buying either an Entertainment Book or a Digital Membership. Whichever you choose, you'll receive hundreds of valuable offers for everything you love to do, and help our fundraising at the same time!

Click a link at www.atsilverstreet.com/p2reg.html to place an order

"I need more days in my week so I can fit more cafes and restaurants in! I have a Book tagged with notes and highlights so I can pre book weekly! It's awesome!" - Jenny



Options include a book filled with vouchers which can be re-claimed at a wide range of venues or a mobile phone-based app allowing members to show their phone and obtain discounts in the same way as when they use a voucher.



To find out more, ask Peter Green or apply on line. A sample book is on display near the front door. 20% of sales go to Drop In Funds.



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Coming events

THESE ARE events for May and June, as there will be no separate June Newsletter. Please remember that some of our people will carry extra loads during these months.

MAY

Sun 7: Communion service, lunch
Sun 14, 21: Regular services (communion Sun 21st)
Sun 28: Guest preacher

Drop In every Thursday, 10 – 1

Sat 20: Working Bee from around 10
Karaoke evening 5:30

Sat 27: Church social is lunch at Goni's Schnitzeria.

JUNE

Sun 4: Guest speaker, Communion, lunch
Sun 11, 18: Guest speakers (communion Sun 18)
Sun 25: Peter Green

Drop In every Thursday 10 – 1

Sat 17: Working Bee from around 10
Sun 18: Church Social is Movies after church

PLAN AHEAD

There is talk of a *Christmas in July* event in — wait for it — July.

OTHER DATES

Rogation Sunday (a special day to pray for our district) 21 May
Pentecost Sunday 4 June
Trinity Sunday 11 June

There have been requests for special prayer for Assyrian Christians (particularly in Iraq and Syria) on Rogation Sunday. It would be good to include all Middle Eastern Christians.

TICK WARNING



Please send this warning to everyone on your e-mail list. If someone comes to your front door saying they are checking for ticks due to the warm weather and asks you to take your clothes off and dance around with your arms up, DO NOT DO IT!! THIS IS A SCAM!! They only want to see you dance naked. I wish I'd gotten this yesterday... I feel so stupid.

K A R A O K E



SATURDAY
20 May
In the church

STARTS
4 pm

PIZZA &
LIGHT
REFRESH-
MENTS
FOLLOW
(7:30/8)

Entry by gold coin donation.

Organised by
Kathi Hellenpach
Karaoke by
Gregory Kokaev

Light in the dark

Website rebuilt

IT WAS silly, I know, but somehow I managed to have two versions of the Church website on my computer — and saved the old version over the new. Of course, I hadn't backed up yet...

For those not in the know, that is bad news. You have a copy of the site on line, but some web site creation software won't let you copy the site back and re-create it. Guess who has software with that limitation?

So... a large part of the past two weeks has been spent in recreating the website from scratch.

"What made you choose that strange purple colour?" asked Hannah.

"It was back in the days when some screens only handled 16 colours. It wasn't red, yellow or blue, and it was pretty safe on screens like that."

"It doesn't go at all with that pink logo..."

I am the father of a pair of "colour kittens", I used to call them. Colour isn't my strong point, unlike my daughters.

Anyway, bit by bit things changed, and will probably change some more.

If you don't like the new logo or the mustard-coloured background (one of the colours in the photo at the top) let me know.

The website talks about light in the dark, and reminds readers that the Bible says that, in Jesus, God came among us.

Is God too far above us to take an interest?

He is the light which says, "God is here and God cares."

Is God equally in everything, caring nothing for good and bad, for right and wrong?

He is the light which says, "God delights in our successes, weeps over our failings and is angry over our injustices."

In answer to the racist or the moralist, he is the light of acceptance and inclusion, the light

revealing where love is found. He declares, "In the same way that the Father has loved me, so I also love you... No one has greater love than this, than to lay down their life for their friends." (See John 15: 9, 13).

The page ends, "We'd be glad to welcome you, too, and pray that you will discover the true light through Jesus our Lord."

As mentioned in my note, I will be away for parts of this month and next. Don't forget, though, that our regular activities will continue during that period, and your presence will be very necessary — if you can possibly be here — to encourage others. Some people will always think, "The pastor is the Boss; when he is away, I don't need to turn up."

I can imagine the squeals if the pastor decided not to turn up when other members were present!

But I am certainly not the boss! That is not how Baptist churches work.

Don't stay away or I'll rip your b**** arms off when I get back — but in love, of course.

There are several social events in planning for these months.

On Saturday 20 May, there will be a karaoke afternoon at the church, starting at 4 pm. The karaokist, Gregory Kokaev, attends Georges River Life Church at Peakhurst. Thanks to Kathi for organising this. There will also be a lunch at Goni's Schnitzeria in Marrickville Road on Saturday 27 May.

Sunday 18 June will be at the movies (after church) and is also Kathi's birthday.

I will miss both events.

MISSION NEWS May–June 2017



FROM THE PASTOR

I WAS reading the story of Jesus' trip to the regions of Tyre and Sidon (now Lebanon) where he met the woman whose daughter was demonised. It reminded me that Jesus took holidays, too.

OLD FRIENDS

During the later part of this month and part of the next, I will be on holidays, too.

You remember that, in 2014, I went overseas for two weeks. Since then, other than my fifth Sunday weekends off, the only long break I have had was the family trip to Tumut over 8–11 July last year.

This was a consequence of the deaths of Chris and Mum the year before. Sorting through deaths and funerals takes a while.

While I am away, I will spend a little time in Singapore, then head to England for 10 days with Luke, Viv and family. After that, all being well (there are details to finalise) I will visit Maria Landfeldt and her family in Sweden — Maria was Maria Limberis when she came here. She married Björn, who now lectures at Lund in Sweden, while they both attended Leichhardt.

Then I have some sights to see and perhaps friends to meet in Germany before heading back to England for a few days with friends in London.

It is important to catch up on family, but it is also important to catch up on friends. Jesus told his disciples that he counted them, not as servants, but as friends. Clearly, friendship was important to him.

A question we should ask ourselves is, "Are the people in the church my friends?" If we are friends of Jesus, we need to work toward being friends with each other as well.

May God's blessing and the presence of Christ be with us all over these two months.

Love,

Peter

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SUNDAY SERVICE: 10:30 am

BAPTISTS

Time to chuck “The Enlightenment”



Professor George Lakoff, Professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, where he has taught since 1972

TWO OF the more notable thinkers of our time, Professor George Lakoff and Bishop Tom (N.T.) Wright have recently taken issue with the 18th century movement known as The Enlightenment, which still influences modern thought, including that of Christians.

The movement emphasised reason as the main source of authority and legitimacy. It pushed ideals like liberty, progress, tolerance, constitutional government, and separation of church and state. It emphasised scientific method and challenged religious orthodoxy.

Many of these ideas came from radical Protestants, particularly Baptists. But in France, the absolute power of kings and a corrupt Church created strong opposition to faith.

Confronting the Enlightenment, churches, too, became cold and rational. But preachers like John Wesley went against the Enlightenment, preaching a reasonable heart religion.

Tom Wright points out that an unacknowledged background to Enlightenment ideas was the philosophy of the pre-Christian Greek philosopher Epikouros,

the founder of Epicureanism. He denied that the gods play a role in the universe, and said that everything is merely the result of random movement of atoms.

George Lakoff, whose religious views are not stated, said, “voters don’t vote their self-interest, they vote their values.” He argues that Progressives still live in the world of Descartes and the Enlightenment — a neat world governed by the rules of logic.

Lakoff argues that the Enlightenment approach to persuasion was never appropriate.

Yet today progressives talk about percentages and demographics while conservatives talk about order, hierarchy and morality.

To Wright, this

N.T Wright, a leading British New Testament scholar, Pauline theologian, and retired Anglican bishop.

is one problem facing today’s church. We have learned to think in terms of statistics and demographics and talk as though God were a bit-player in a world where the spiritual has little place.

Perhaps the beginning of a true Christian revolution will be to return to a worldview where the God of the entire universe has become human in Jesus and has defeated death to reign forever.

Let’s celebrate it, live it, and challenge the world’s outlook.



Egyptian Christians amaze reporter



Blood stains on floor of Coptic Cathedral after Palm Sunday bombing. Source: Haaretz/ STRINGER/ AFP

IN THE aftermath of the Palm Sunday church bombings in Egypt, people are expressing amazement at Coptic Christians’ prayers for ISIS and rejection of revenge.

“Egyptian Christians are made of steel,” said Egyptian TV host, Amr Adeeb, after a 10-second pause in which he was apparently lost for words.

The cause was Coptic Christian, Samira Fahmi’s, surprising willingness to forgive the terrorist who killed her husband during the recent Palm Sunday bombings targeting two Egyptian churches.

Samira’s husband, Naseem Fahmi died intercepting the suicide bomber at St. Mark’s Cathedral in Alexandria.

“I ask the Lord to forgive them and let them try to think,” Samira Fahmi said, according to the *World Watch Monitor*. “If they think, they will know that we didn’t do anything wrong to them.”

“May God forgive you, and we also forgive you,” she continued. “Believe me, we forgive you. You put my husband in a place I couldn’t have dreamed of. Be-

lieve me, I am proud of him. And I wish I was there beside him.”

According to a translation provided by the Bible Society of Egypt, in response to the powerful display of charity, Adeeb lavished praise on Samira, and Egyptian Christians as a whole.

“Egyptian Christians are made of steel,” he said. “Egyptian Christians for hundreds of years are bearing many atrocities and disasters... How great is this amount of forgiveness you have?”

After a 2016 attack, Coptic Bishop, Anba Angaelos, the general bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, told *The Christian Post* that Christians in Egypt had forgiven those responsible.

At that time, the bomber’s name was known, but there was confusion about which terrorist organisation he represented.

But regardless of who was responsible for the attack, Angaelos said that the persecuted Coptic Christian community

would not respond to the attack with vengeance.

“Historically in Egypt, after similar attacks, of course there has been anger and public outcry, but there hasn’t been retaliation or revenge,” Angaelos explained. “That is one thing that we are very thankful for.”

“We are praying that there is healing in the community. We are ready to and we already have forgiven people for doing this because at the end of the day, a lack of forgiveness harms us more than anyone else.”

the night of the bombings, Orthodox priest Boules George said he thanks and loves those who did this crime. Speaking to a congregation, he said “I long to talk to you about our Christ, and tell you how wonderful he is,” addressing the terrorists. Then, turning to the church, he said, “How about we make a commitment today to pray for them?”

“If they know that God is love and experience his love, they could not do these things—never, never, never.”

BAPTISTS

Jesus’ Party



TONY CAMPOLO wrote a book, *The Kingdom of God is a Party*. It is certainly backed up by passages in the Gospels. Jesus loved parties, and also taught parables about them. As we consider the Reformation, we should look at how the idea of a party can inform the directions of a church.

I have long had a mental image of what our church should be like. But we have been through many struggles and have spent a lot of time fighting fires when we needed to be planning ahead.

We should go back to the basics — which is what the Reformers attempted.

When I first came to Marrickville, I emphasised things we should take very seriously:

- being a church which worships God the Father in obedience to Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit’s power.
- preaching the gospel
- being open to the gifts which the Holy Spirit gives.

I said that all the churches in our district, need to be revived. We need churches on fire for Christ.

When we had a problem with finances, I prayed about it and God referred me to Acts 1:8, where Jesus tells his disciples to begin where they were and spread their ministry from there as God provided resources.

And the same principle applied to us. We had to begin in Marrickville, and spread our ministry further afield as God provided.

We had some nasty experiences with tenant churches, too.

We could have done much more than we did. Still, it was all about developing a picture of what our church should be like.

In Luke 14, we read about Jesus at a meal with a prominent Pharisee. It’s a formal dinner, with lots of people coming in and jostling to get the best seats at the table.

Jesus tells them that it’s better to wait and let your host show you your seat. That way you are honoured by others and not just showing you have a big head.

Jesus also told his host, “Instead of inviting people whose reputation might rub off on you, invite people who can’t do anything for you, and God will bless that.”

Of course, one man didn’t understand at all. He said, “Blessed are those who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

All he can think of is that he expects to get a pat on the head from God when the Kingdom is fully revealed.

So Jesus tells a parable about the man preparing a great banquet for many guests.

But, when the servant went to get the guests, they all had excuses — wealthy men’s excuses: marriages, property deals, new farm equipment to try out.

Not one was willing to come to the meal.

Isn’t Jesus telling these Pharisees that they are the kind of people who won’t come to God’s banquet when it is put on? Isn’t he saying, “You are too self-involved to be bothered, even when it’s a really important event like the feast in God’s Kingdom.”?

That is certainly how the home owner takes it. His friends are just plain rude and selfish. He won’t keep putting time into them when they have no time for him.

The householder was enraged. He ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

There was still room, so he sent the servant out to force people to come in from the roads and lanes.

Have a think about this.

Jesus is telling these self-important Pharisees, “The Kingdom of God is really about the people no one wants. It is really about poor, crippled, blind, and lame people and the homeless; about the people on the fringes, who are despised by society.”

In fact, God is so determined that these people will get in, that he is going to get behind them and shove them, to make sure they are at his party.

It is what Jesus said at the beginning of his public ministry, as you read in Luke 4: 18ff

His ministry is focused on the

poor, the imprisoned, the blind and the oppressed.

They are not only invited, they are commanded. They *have* to be there; God is passionate about it — and if he is, then we have to learn to be, too.

It is never easy. It looks OK on paper, but remember what we have experienced.

There were incontinent people, people who spilled their drinks and dropped food all over the carpet, people who threatened violence if they didn’t get what they wanted.

This is what it is like to bring in people from the streets and alleys. Along with quite a few nice and ordinary people, you will find people like those.

These people will never make us a rich church, but God will bless us even in our struggles.

Now hear what the master of the house says,

‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame... Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’

We need to be an inclusive fellowship, a place where as many different people from as many different backgrounds as possible are fully welcome and made at home.

But don’t forget that the owner of the house is putting on a party.

God’s Kingdom is a party that people are invited to.

Somehow we have to turn being the church into a real party. And that’s the bit I really find hard to work out.

How do we make our church to be a party, a little reflection of God’s Kingdom on earth?

There are many kinds of party — dances, barbecues, sit down feasts...

The thing is to find what works for us, so that we can experience and share the joy of the Lord.

Based on a 2013 talk