

PENNANT HILLS UNITING CHURCH

OPEN FORUM



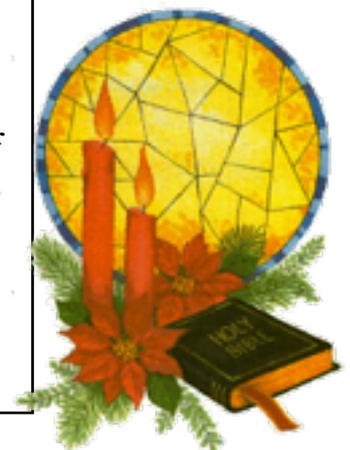
ACT FOR PEACE

As part of the International Day of Peace, Pennant Hills Uniting Church arranged a Peace focused service on 22 September.

Congregation members signed peace dove action cards with messages directed at Australian politicians calling them to invest in peace-building projects and keep their promise on aid. Young and the old joined in on the action, proudly showing their peace doves.

The international aid agency for the National Council of Churches in Australia sent a representative, Corinne Roberts to our church and she received the doves with grateful thanks.

The photograph she took appeared in the Act for Peace publication the following week so it is now being shown on the World Wide Web!



PLEASE REFER TO THE BACK PAGE FOR CONTACTS & CALENDAR

A DIFFERENT KIND OF "CHURCH"

Reports have been circulating of new "congregations" of "Sunday Assembly" springing up around Australia after finding great success in Great Britain. Sunday Assembly is Britain's "atheist church", a gathering for non-believers!

Typical services include inspirational talks, readings & sing-alongs & always finish with tea and cake. Co-founder Sanderson Jones, a British comedian, got the idea when reflecting after a Christmas Carol concert 6 years ago. "There was so much about it I loved, but at the heart it is something I don't believe in," he said.

There is much to love about Christmas - connecting with family and the whole festive atmosphere, but what do we believe about it?

I specially enjoy receiving the Christmas card of one of our friends. Each year, "Keep Christ in Christmas" emblazons the outside of the envelope for all to see. True, trees and reindeer can be more prominent than the manger scene or angels & shepherds worshipping the infant Jesus, and "Season's Greetings" often replaces "Merry Christmas" or "Glory to God in the Highest".

So what do you believe about Christmas?

Matthew's gospel records what the angel said to Joseph: "You shall name Him Jesus (Jesus means Saviour) because He will save His people from their sins." Mt 1:21 making 'what the prophet Isaiah (7:14) said come true: "A virgin will become pregnant and have a son and he will be called Immanuel" (which means, "God with us").' Mt 1:22b,23 Is there anything more wonderful than the peace of being forgiven, and the assurance of God with us, as we journey through life?

"May the peace which Christ alone can give, dwell richly in the hearts and minds of you and your loved ones. May we believe and receive anew, God's amazing gift of His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords."

And merry Christmas!

Allan Blyth Supply Minister



A DAY AWAY

It was only two suburbs away but it felt much further. Twenty two people spent most of Saturday up the road in Normanhurst Uniting Church, contemplating where we stand in relationship to God and others. A series of short messages from Pastor Bill Hybels were thought-provoking and provided discussion and ideas for 'Caring and Sharing' the Gospel beyond the church. Many thanks to Allan Blyth for providing this time of reflection.

AN EVENING AT HOME

The church grounds will be open to everyone on the Sunday before Christmas, 22 December.

There will be a special Community Christmas Event with free BBQ, carols and a Christmas pantomime, starting at 6.30 pm.

Look out for the colourful flyers, put it in your diary and mention it to your friends and neighbours.

CHRISTMAS 2013

Advent Services 9.15am

- I Sun 1 Dec: The King is Coming!
 II Sun 8 Dec: "Christ our Hope"
 special Q & A session with Tara Curlewis
 III Sun 15 Dec:
 Guest speaker, elder Fenton Sharpe
 IV Sun 22 Dec:
 "Jesus saves" What does that mean?

Christmas Community Event

6:30pm Sunday 22nd Dec with free BBQ, carols and pantomime.

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve 9:30 pm
 Traditional readings and Carols
 Christmas Day 8:30am-9:25am
 All ages celebrate "The everlasting gift!"

Boomers "Aussie Christmas"

Calling all "Boomers"
 7:30pm Saturday 7th December



Giving Useful Gifts This Christmas

This Christmas, Pennant Hills Uniting Church is again providing people with the opportunity to purchase Christmas (or other!) gifts that make a real difference to poor and marginalised communities. TEAR Australia is a Christian development, relief and advocacy organisation responding to global poverty and injustice. Inspired by Jesus' call to love our neighbours and God's heart for justice, TEAR works in partnership with other Christian organisations around the world and with Indigenous organisations in Australia.

Gifts are from TEAR Australia's Useful Gift Catalogue and support individuals, families or communities in health, education, food and community. Gifts range from \$5 (for chickens and education essentials) to \$10 000 for supporting farming projects in Mozambique and Kenya. TEAR pioneered these useful gift catalogues; a concept now adopted by many other charities and agencies. Gift catalogues are in the church foyers. Gifts can be purchased through our TEAR Representative, Caryn Kneale, 9876 1611; by a toll-free phone call to TEAR (1800 244 986) or online at www.usefulgifts.org.

MESSIAH by HANDEL 1685-1759

The composition of *Messiah* occupied Handel for only 24 days - one of the most miraculous feats in all creative human endeavour. The first performance took place at a concert given for charity on 13th April 1742 in Dublin, where Handel had gone to try to make his fortune after his London operatic enterprises had been ruined by scheming rivals. *Messiah* was not heard in London until 1743 when it was given at the Covent Garden Theatre. Handel regarded *Messiah* in a very special light, reserving it, whatever his own financial circumstances might be, for occasions of charity.

It is only in recent years that we have seen a revival of the work in Handel's original scoring, with a small choir, an orchestra of oboes, bassoons, strings and continuo. Trumpets are added in four numbers and drums in only two.

Messiah was written at a time when coloratura singing was at its height, by a composer who spent most of his time writing Italian opera and makes enormous demands on both soloists and chorus. The variety of moods, of which Handel shows himself master, is staggeringly wide, ranging from the tenderness and joy of part I, 'The Nativity' through the dark painful and stormily dramatic episodes of the Crucifixion story, to the radiant certainty and triumphant rejoicing of the Hallelujah chorus.

"I did think I did see the heavens opened and the great God himself," said Handel, in speaking of the composition of this majestic chorus. At an early performance King George II, moved by its overwhelming grandeur, or possibly overcome by plain surprise - for in his day Handel was regarded as a very surprising composer - rose to his feet, bringing the audience with him and setting a fashion that has persisted to this day.

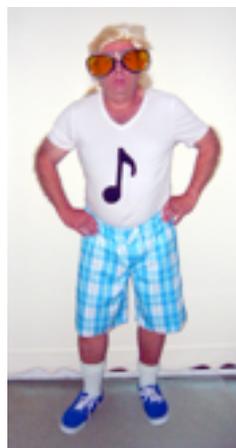
Thanks to Helen Stuart Styles for this copy from a performance she attended.

Baby Boomers



During 2013 an exciting new ministry commenced at Pennant Hills Uniting aiming to connect with Baby Boomers in the local area. Spurred on by a desire to connect with others and seek opportunities to introduce them to Jesus, Baby Boomers within the congregation have been holding monthly social get-togethers. Each night has had a different theme and a varied and creative program. Monthly activities commenced in March with an Australiana Night and the Australian theme will conclude the year with an Australian Christmas in December. Other evenings have included: *Retro TV, Back to Childhood, 60s & 70s Juke Box, Royalty and Revolution, Finals Fever, 50s Rock* as well as a *Trivia Night*. The November activity had a different focus in that a guest speaker presented a scholarly and thoroughly researched investigation in to the facts and theories surrounding the assassination of US President John F Kennedy.

The organising team has been blessed with great creativity and enthusiasm; resulting in the programs being well received by those who have attended. The costumes worn by Geoff Smithson, that are inspired by the evening's theme, are always a talking point. Each month we have welcomed newcomers, who have been informed of the group



through local papers, by letterbox drops and a Boomers Banner that is put on the church fence before each event. We have also enjoyed the company of some couples since the group began.

The Boomers team has been very grateful for the support given by the congregation to this new outreach. The financial assistance and delivery of thousands of leaflets has been invaluable. The team is also pleased to have received a \$5000 grant from the Uniting Church's Synod Mission Resources Fund. However of greatest importance has been the prayer support and priority of God's Lordship and leadership of the ministry.

The team asks for your continued support and especially prayer for:

- The building of meaningful relationships and friendships with those who come to the monthly events
- Sensitivity to each person's own story and the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Opportunities for and wisdom in conversations about faith and following Jesus

SAFE CHURCH AWARENESS WORKSHOP

Along with about 40 other people Pat When & I attended the Safe Church Awareness Workshop at Castle Hill Uniting Church in August. We were led in the programme by Rev. Christine Bayliss Kelly, a Children, Youth & Family Officer in the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery.

This workshop was all about recognising:-

1. The Church's obligations when working with children or vulnerable people.
2. Understanding & responding to abuse & encouraging protective behaviours.
3. Understanding our duty of care as a Congregation & the Community expectations of our conduct, living up to our Christian standards.
4. The need for clear policies & procedures together with the knowledge of who to contact for help in particular conflict situations.

Congregational needs & expectations are often unspoken & this is where some forms of pastoral & practical assistance need to be easily accessible. We need "Safe" programmes in our Church environment, with a clear understanding of our duty of care, making sure as far as reasonably practical, that the health & safety of others is not put at risk from any of our activities .

We need transparency & accountability in all our operations – as a Church people we have a Duty of Care to ALL who participate in ANY activities organised by our Church. There are many vulnerable people who need our protection & care. Emotional & practical support needs to be readily available also to those carers who are willing to help these vulnerable people.

The questions we need to address are:-

1. What support mechanisms do we have in place to make our Church a "Safe" Church?
2. What reporting avenues are open to us following any supposed incidents of misconduct?
3. How do we respond to any allegations or grievances & what are the legal implications?
4. What emotional & spiritual assistance is available to those in trouble?

This seminar gave us lots of food for thought and overall it was a very interesting and informative day. I would encourage others to take advantage of one of these seminars when possible.

Elaine Bellamy.



RENOVATIONS

- The Church Council approved the use of funds to improve and renovate some of the church rooms.
- The small hall now has a clean white ceiling and new lights.
- New carpets will be laid in the central foyer, stairs and small hall.
- Cupboards in the long hall will be replaced to allow for more storage.
- A generous grant has been allocated by UnitingCare Ageing for a much needed audio-visual system in the church.
- This will benefit both Sunday Worship services and the Leisure Learning program.
- We acknowledge this grant with grateful thanks.

THE LAST MARKET DAY

- The hardworking committee have decided it is time to draw to a close the bi-monthly Market Days.
- Apart from being being a wonderful opportunity to meet members of the local community and beyond, more than \$100,000 has been received which is a tremendous outcome.
- Watch out next year for other ways the church will open its doors and grounds.
- Thank you to everyone who has been so supportive in so many ways.

WHO'S WHO AT PENNANT HILLS UNITING

???

**PLEASE CONTACT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING
IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS
OR CONCERNS.**

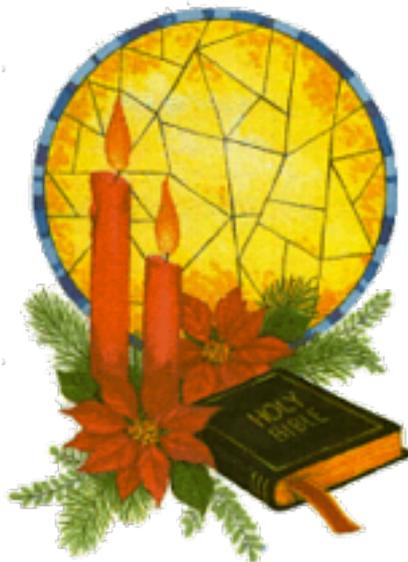
(Supply) Minister	Allan Blyth	9484 1039
Chair of Congregation	Bruce Graham	9630 5305
Secretary of Congregation	Nora Wright	9484 6214
Chair of Council Council	Peter Kneale	9876 1611
Secretary	Christine Lees	9487 8323
Church Treasurer	Guy Williams	9875 4197
Prayer Chain	Marj Ebb	9481 0089
Hall Bookings	Allan Bellamy	9875 4416
Leisure & Learning	Trevor Barratt	9481 8597

Elders

Mrs Heather Baillie
Mr Peter Kneale
Mr Norman Lees
Ms Rosanna Manganas
Mr Tom Nowland
Dr Fenton Sharpe

Councillors

Mr Allan Bellamy
Mrs Caryn Kneale
Mrs Christine Lees
Mrs Dianne New
Mrs Maureen Rees
Mr Gordon Selig
Mr Geoff Smithson



Calendar

Sunday December 8

Visit by Rev Tara Curlewis
General Secretary NCCA

Saturday December 14

Final Market Day

Sunday December 15

White Gift Sunday (bring a plain white wrapped gift for Lifeline)

Sunday December 22

Evening BBQ and Christmas Event at 6.30pm

Christmas Eve

Carols around the streets.
Service in the church 9.30 pm

Christmas Day

Service 8.30 am

○ Come let us adore Him!
Christ the Lord!

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