
OPEN FORUM

Proclaiming Christ and Serving the Community

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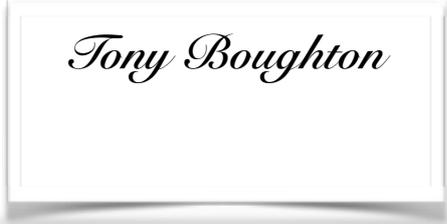
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Christian
Education in
schools



Tony Boughton

The whole congregation was shocked by the recent death of Tony Boughton. As well as being a great guy he was also a major support to our Treasurer, Wendy Boughton, who has now given up the position. We thank her for the work she has done for 16 months.

Tony was Treasurer for many years and worked diligently for the benefit of our congregation. He was an integral part of the Leisure Learning team on Friday mornings with his interest in indoor bowls and cards. He was also very involved in the Stamp Collection centre in Sydney which is a fundraising arm of NSW Synod. At his funeral, which was standing room only, were a large number of his bowling friends, as well as many who knew Tony as a friend or colleague.

We are now looking for a replacement Treasurer as this is a vital role to enable the the church to keep active in the community.

People have rallied round temporarily to continue the routine financial operations and we are grateful to Nora Wright and Barry Baird who ensured the BAS report was delivered to the Tax Office on time and also prepared the quarterly statements ending in March.

We also appreciate the work done by the Finance Committee especially Norman Lees who prepared a draft budget which was discussed and recommended by the Church Council to be presented to the Congregation for approval.

Please pray that the Treasurer role will be filled and consider if you know anyone who may be able to help in some way.

BEYOND THE CHURCH WALLS

Our church is not stuck in a building. Over the years it has looked for innovative ways to reach out to people in various ways. The Monday Bible Study is not held in the church. People go to the home of a member who cannot get out in the evenings. Fortunately she lives in a place, Yurana House, where there is a convenient community room for the meeting to be held.

For some years the church has been holding mid-week communion services with lunch for those who could not attend on Sundays for particular reasons. This has now changed. Lutanda Retirement Village has many residents who find it difficult to get out without help so the church is going to them on the second Wednesday afternoon at 3.00pm for a Communion Service and time of fellowship.

This is really appreciated especially by some long standing members of the congregation who still feel close connections with their local Uniting Church. For more details contact Peg Dunn or Tom Nowland.

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MEMORYLINK
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The MemoryLink Project continues to develop. A Report to Council stated that the original grant was \$36,000. To date \$24900 has been received. A new direction for Unitingcare Ageing means all has changed so there is no more allocation. However outstanding loans are not to be returned so it balances out and happily no more return reports are needed. All finances are to be included in Church Finance under a specific section for future needs.

We now have our own website at <http://www.memorylink.org.au>
Everyone is asked to go to the website and try to use it, sending any comments to Fenton Sharpe for modification.
Please also Google 'MemoryLink' and see what happens. The first site to appear will probably be our church website and you will also see one or two newspaper articles about our MemoryLink. All the other sites on p.1-2 will refer to other companies etc. Our website will probably appear on p.3. We need to get everybody to click on our website in google as often as possible which I understand will promote the site towards the top. *Fenton Sharpe*

THE AUTUMN FETE

Wonderful weather always helps to make a successful Fete and this was no exception. On 16 April Bellamy Street was full of parked cars, when the jumping castle attracted passers by. The enthusiasm of members of the congregation for supporting this Fundraising Event was as good as ever.

As a result over \$4000 was put into the bank. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard beforehand, on the day and of course with the clearing up afterwards.

SATURDAY OR OTHER DAY CLUB

The history of the social life of the church has been varied according to the needs of the congregation. Many years ago the young families started a group called Couples Club. The youth members of the church arranged to babysit for the parents who appreciated a fun night out at the church once a month on a Saturday.

This continued for many years, with a range of interesting talks, trips out and very funny games nights. Eventually as times changed and children grew up, it was recognised that the name should be changed to include any person who wanted a night of fellowship close to home.

Saturday Club seemed an appropriate title. Committee members were elected to arrange events for the year and many people have worked extremely hard to ensure the first Saturday evenings or the holiday Monday outings are full of enjoyment.

This year it was decided to try a different approach. Each month a couple of members of the congregation have offered to organise the meeting. The church notices will provide details for each month. You are all invited to come along and bring a friend with you.

The June event will be a picnic at Fagan Park on the Queen's Birthday Monday 13 June.

THANK YOU FROM EXODUS

Over many years our church congregation and Leisure & Learning participants have been supporting the Exodus Foundation by dropping off tins and packets of food in a large box. This is taken regularly to Ashfield where it is given to those in need.

Recently we were given a guide to what is really appreciated by those who distribute the meals.

Exodus needs all year round:

Canned protein - ham, chicken, fish. Canned vegetables, beans, lentils, chickpeas, baked beans.

Soups, casseroles, spaghetti, instant coffee (500g or larger)

Items to avoid:

Cooked food, perishable or out of date items.

No glass products.

No sugar-based foods. Guests are served sweet treats that are baked in-house and focus on providing guests with healthy and nutritious meals.

Many thanks to all those who are continuing to assist dedicated people in helping those in need.

HOW DO YOU GIVE YOUR SUNDAY OFFERINGS?

Do you have an envelope arrangement? You can put your offering directly into the dated envelope when convenient and bring it along on any Sunday. New boxes of envelopes are available in the foyer.

Do you do a direct debit arrangement? This works for many in the church who don't have to search for collection money each week. They know that wherever they are in the world their offering is going to the church on a regular basis.

Speak to Christine or Norman Lees for more details

An opportunity for you an opportunity for others

The question of science and God can be a barrier to faith.

Do you ask how can God and science both be true?

Can Christians believe what science says?

Can you be a scientist and also believe in God?

Join us at **Pennant Hills Uniting Church on Sunday 19th June** to listen to leading Christians and scientists discuss ***Science and God***. Commencing at **5pm** there will be refreshments followed by the DVD presentation and discussion.

The DVD presentation is from *Towards Belief* a series produced in Australia to explore issues that are barriers to Christian faith for many Australians.

Plan to be part of this special event and invite others to come to.

OUR PRESBYTERY - FROM TWO TO ONE!

Since the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977, the five Presbyteries in the greater Sydney region have maintained their original size and shape.

The boundaries between and around Sydney North and Ku-ring-gai Presbyteries in particular have never seemed logical. The internal division between them divides suburbs and congregations of very similar demographics along an indiscernible geographic boundary.

On 17 June 2015, at the invitation of Ku-ring-gai Presbytery, representatives from Ku-ring-gai, Sydney North, neighbouring Presbyteries and Uniting Mission and Education met together to talk about possibilities that would “focus on growing the Kingdom of God through a refocus on mission; to work together to reshape Presbytery boundaries and provide an administrative structure which will support the mission of the Church while managing meagre or diminishing resources.”

We are now in a time of rapid change with Synod approving the formation of a new Presbytery and the dissolution of two former Presbyteries. Ku-ring-gai and Sydney North Presbyteries met separately for the last time on 18 and 19 May respectively, and the **Sydney Central Coast Presbytery** will be inaugurated on 22 June 2016, at Turramurra Uniting Church.

This year the two Standing Committees have met as a joint interim body, with the blessing of Synod Standing Committee; the Pastoral Relations Committees have met concurrently; the Treasurer has been in conversation with the Business Committee; and the Project Co-ordinator, UME Consultant and SN Presbytery Minister have been very busy seeking to guide the process and keep everything on track.

On Saturday 12 March, the first joint presbytery meeting was held at Turramurra UC. There was a buzz of anticipation as people gathered, many who are not usually representatives of Presbytery. A time of listening to stories from both Presbyteries was helpful for naming the values and vision of the congregations – words such as growth, hospitality and relationship were used to express common wisdom which may help to shape a shared vision for the work and purpose of the new Presbytery.

A representative of the finance task group spoke to the gathering about the draft budget and the suggested formula for raising revenue for the work of the Presbytery through a system of levies or contributions from all congregations. It is proposed that 2% of all income received by a congregation, not including special appeal funds, shall be paid to the Presbytery to meet the budget requirements. This is going to mean a greater allocation of funds for the work of the Presbytery than previously paid and congregations are being asked to factor that increased amount into their 2016-2017 budgets.

Other points of interest:

- The combined Presbytery consists of 21 aged care complexes, 69 congregations, 1 faith community, 2 specialist ministries (Lane Cove Chaplain and Macquarie Uni), 3 schools
- The new Presbytery office will be at Thornleigh/Hillcrest Uniting Church
- The recognition of “Chatswood South Faith Community”.
- The subdivision of Denistone East property.
- East Killara has closed its doors.
- Balgowlah is undertaking significant capital works.
- A lot is still happening with **interfaith, multicultural ministry and reconciliation**

THE B2B ZONE: OUR FIRST ZONE MEETING

Report by Bruce Graham, Presbytery Representative

The newly amalgamated Presbytery has recognised 6 zones as groupings of congregations that can be considered together for various actions by Presbytery as a whole. It is now exploring whether

- for Presbytery, zones could perhaps ease the administrative load on Presbytery itself; and
- for zones, Presbytery might give better attention to and support to the zones on more local matters; and
- zone meetings might generate useful mutual advice and support.

The first meeting of our **Berowra-to-Becroft** zone was held on Tuesday 26th April at Cherrybrook. All congregations were represented, though not by as many reps as was hoped. We were represented by Rev. Alex Thomas, Bruce Graham and Christine Lees. Working groups looked at possible purposes and functions for zones and (hopefully) their outcomes using a discussion format provided. Notes from each group were collected for the organisers to study and general comments were received.

It seemed (to me) that the first step should have been to assess what if any responsibilities and authorities could be delegated to a zone, though of course this came up in various subjects discussed. A potential trap noted was the possible creation of another layer of administration without easing the load on the present heavily loaded senior persons in Presbytery, and any zone activities will have to be cost-neutral.

Returning now to the matter of delegation, when listening to the discussion I formed the view that there were virtually no delegations feasible regarding ministerial matters such as minister training (plus acceptance, placement, ongoing education or training, support etc.), fusion of congregations, or building sales or constructions. One group wondered if there could be **any** delegated authority under UC rules. However, consultations from suitable persons within the zone were thought possible and using “gifted” representatives from zones on Standing and Pastoral Relations committees was mentioned.

Regarding congregations within a zone, there is really nothing to delegate except the machinery of holding meetings, appointing a chairman and secretary, arranging meetings and so on. However, there seemed to us to be major benefits potentially available from knowledge of successful outreach and internal programs, agreeing combined programs or activities, mutual help and inspiration, sharing available resources, recommending policy changes (if any) to Presbytery and defining where help (resources) should be requested from Presbytery.

OPEN FORUM SOAPBOX

Readings from scripture in the service: a personal view regarding their introduction.

I would like to mount my soapbox in the Open Forum (not that they knew about soapboxes in Rome or Athens) and mention a detail regarding the introduction to the readings. This is not a theological issue, just a matter of taste and information-giving.

Quite often the reader will abbreviate the subject, for example “1 Corinthians 1; 3 to 16” or more fully “1 Corinthians, Chapter 1, verses 3 to 16” (there’s a lot to be said for the American style of “3 through 16” , but that’s another story).

Rather than abbreviate, I much prefer to say, for the same example, “Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians”, and similarly, “The Book of Job”, “The Acts of the Apostles”, “The Gospel according to John” and “The Revelation to John” (as the Good News terms it, though I like the even fuller version “The Revelation of Jesus Christ to his servant John”).

There are a few books of the bible whose titles do not have abbreviations, but not many, so my comment would apply to most readings. I think it’s nice to use the fuller and more dignified title and it’s good to be reminded that although the core message is the same, the Apostles saw and remembered events differently, like any witnesses, and similarly “Corinthians” does not mean much by itself, whereas mention of a letter reminds us of what form of words we are actually listening to.

Two more things. Firstly, I would suggest that a brief word of introduction is often appropriate and should be encouraged, especially when the verses to be read out are only clear in the context of what came immediately before. Secondly, if as reader you are not sure of pronunciation of a word, try www.biblespeech.com. or any of the similar aids easily found on the net.

Bruce Graham

BOOMERS ARE STILL BOOMING!

Look at the noticeboard in the central foyer for past and future events in words and pictures. Fun Fellowship and Variety is there for all to see.

Why not tell your family, friends and neighbours of ‘Boomer Age’ to go to the church website for the latest information.



CHRISTMAS 2015

Cars slowed down, people waved, and loud speakers carried the voices of the carol singers across Pennant Hills. The initiative from Elizabeth Thomas for a carol concert for Christmas 2015 grew into a major event with the energetic Allan Blyth throwing himself behind the concept. Then the whole congregation rose to the occasion by helping in one way or another.

The result was a wonderful time of eating lots of food, sitting on rugs and chatting, watching the dancing angels and nativity tableau and joining the choir in singing favourite Christmas carols and songs. The weather was perfect and the atmosphere of community involvement made this a memorable evening. Heartfelt thanks to all who were involved.



CONTACTS

Minister: Rev Alex Thomas 9484 1039

Prayer Chain: Mrs Marj Ebb 9481 0089

Bible Study: Mr Peter Kneale 9876 1611

Room Hire: Mr Allan Bellamy 9875 4416

Chair of Congregation:

Mr Bruce Graham 9989 8992

Treasurer:

TBA

Elders/Councillors:

Mrs Heather Baillie, Mrs Betty Graham, Mr Norman Lees, Mr Peter Kneale, Mr Tom Nowland, Dr Fenton Sharpe

Councillors:

Mrs Christine Lees, Mrs Caryn Kneale, Mrs Dianne New, Mr Gordon Selig, Mr Geoff Smithson

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Well done Maureen.

After over 40 years Maureen Rees decided this year it was time to give up being on the church council. Her work across the whole area of church activity is extraordinary. She has been involved not only as Church Councillor but also as Chairperson She has also been Chair and Secretary of the Property Committee and a member of the Finance Committee. The congregation is indebted to her enthusiasm, dedication and energy over the years. We look forward using her wisdom and experience for many years to come.

MANY MANY THANKS !

**HOW CAN
YOU HELP IN THIS
CHURCH ?**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS OR
WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER
IN ANY WAY PLEASE TALK TO
ANY OF THE PEOPLE
MENTIONED ON
THIS PAGE**

Prepared by Christine Lees.

Disclaimer: This content does not necessarily express the opinion of the Uniting Church, its agencies, the Minister or Congregation

Supplementary information which may be of interest to you.

A LETTER FROM NSW SYNOD TO OUR CHURCH

Dear Friend,

Advocacy to reduce the harm of illicit drugs: supporting a better way

As you may be aware, in response to a proposal put forward by the Social Justice Forum, approval was given at the Synod 2016 Meeting (16-19 April) for the Uniting Church in Australia NSW & ACT congregations and its services to advocate for:

- Increased investment in harm reduction and demand reduction strategies, and*
 - Further measures to decriminalise individual possession of small amounts of illegal drugs (not to decriminalise the illegal supply of drugs).*
- With this leadership, Uniting will be developing a policy with various councils of the Church and leading an advocacy campaign that calls on government leaders and policy makers to rethink their stance on illegal drugs. No doubt the conversations which will be had as part of this work will be difficult – but it is with our faith and commitment to social justice that we will be taking this forward.*

A working party will be formed with members of the Social Justice Forum to deliver the campaign, with guidance from Dr Marianne Jauncey, the Medical Director of the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre. The working party will seek expert advice and consult with legal, medical and experts who are calling for these changes. Importantly, we will also be listening and engaging with families and individuals affected by these issues.

We acknowledge this initiative may raise a lot of questions and some concerns among some members of the Uniting Church community. The working group will be preparing background information to give more information about the proposal and next steps for policy development.

For your reference enclosed is the policy paper which was put forward to the 2016 Synod, and a media release to announce Synod's decision. Going forward, I will continue to keep everyone informed as our work progresses on this important issue.

*Yours faithfully,
Rev. Dr Andrew Williams General Secretary*

PENNANT HILLS CHERRYBROOK SCHOOLS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION provides a wonderful opportunity for Christian Outreach. Your financial contribution provides for the dedicated staff. More details - Peter Kneale.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Graham Castle - Report Term 1, 2016.

Summary:

Classes:

Number of classes have increased this year, while Support classes have also increased to leave my load increased. All classes have clearer ownership of SRE attendance, getting further and deeper more easily with most lessons. Numbers in and out have roughly balanced.

Administration Changes:

The school has fare welled Mr Geoff Wing as Principal at the end of last term after a major innings at the school.

The new Principal Mr Ross Warren has been sighted although not due to commence till week 5.

SRE is still running with a strong opt in approach. Absence of indication is taken as indicating opt out. No further follow up is currently possible. The library – not in Christian Education is now the default holding bay until things are resolved. However I understand new guidelines that will improve this situation markedly.

Numbers in Year 7 have increased compared to Year 8. Have now had 15 admin hiccups.

I have had discussions with the new Administrative head of Christian Education about reconsidering communication lines to parents about SRE. He is open to this however this will most likely wait until after the new head is installed.

Volunteer groups in the school have grown a little especially due to keen new year 7 students.

Extra-curricular activities:

Boost Tuesday Lunchtime Group (for years 9-12) – this has a new name, an extra volunteer in one of the Year 7 mums – Mrs Ruth Middleton. Still coordinated by Geoff Everett. Numbers have grown to 7 faithful students. This is principally a Bible study that is now lined up with Ignite program, intending to grow Christians in their maturity.

Wednesday IGNITE Lunchtime Group (Years 7 & 8) a Christian group, with games, food, sometimes a bible talk, fellowship, usually Bible study, and opportunity for Christian students to cut their teeth on student Bible study leadership. Currently this group sets the teaching agenda for both groups. It is organised and led by Adam Scott, and Katrina Low with Year 10/11 students. It is usually located in one of the drama rooms.

Global Leadership Conference/40 Hour Famine No news currently.

New Materials being used in teaching curriculum

Youtube videos from EngagingwithIslam.org for Year 10, specifically Part 2 vid on the life of Mohammed, and Chicago Police video on Judaism. Max7.org has also been sourced for support unit materials.

Innovations and Modifications to Curriculum

Improved consideration and treatment of Job in year 9 for identity and integrity, and ideas about using God, as well as suffering, tragedy, suffering, injustice. Upgraded Judaism and Islam prezis & approach as well.

Issues or Problems in School Life

Sadly new students are still heading to the Library rather than SRE under the opt in arrangement. There have been a number (15) of students taken out due to admin blunders since the beginning of term.

The support unit is under new management again this term, however the unit seems more at ease with the latest selection and while they (the teachers) feel even better it will take a while for the new approaches she brings to settle with the very difficult new low functioning students to manage.

A new school management software Sentral was introduced last term – it has had its teething problems with many students misplaced. This resulted in my name being left off the parent teacher night booking sheet.

Despite being remedied only the day before I still met a substantial number of parents.

Yet another new timetable this term has had minor teething problems. A number of rooms that were under repair have been completed— so the pressure of classroom allocation has reduced but still required keeping some kids together in the support unit rather than going to another room.

I am considering a new program this term for the new mix of kids given the rooming changes. Many support students are unable to follow a class lesson plan much beyond colouring in and listening/actions to singing /video.

Best bits:

A number (perhaps 5 or 6) students have come to me indicating they have been baptized in the last 2-3 months.

Increasing numbers of students are seeking to sort out their commitment to the Lord Jesus.

A significant number of staff now identify themselves to be Christians. (>10%)

A student in Year 7 as part of their assignment in another subject chose to explain the Gospel and how to become a Christian in class.

More than 5 blocks of chocolate have been awarded as kids have mastered the names of all Bible books.

Class prayer is being more regularly introduced.

Learning how to study the Bible for top support class has commenced and was excitedly received.

Year 7 increasingly keen and knowledgeable, inviting friends to Ignite.

Parent teacher night proved positive and helpful.

A great atmosphere at Athletics carnival due in no small part to the actions of many Christian students and staff.

Worst bits:

The agitation from specific parents hasn't abated. It's clear that political decisions are not just being made in the light of the radicalization of Muslim students. There is also a strong element of promoting the opting out of Christian Ed under the guise of neutrality, in line with the humanist world view that many subscribe to in public schools. This has resulted in less students. The public SRE unease has filtered into some staff and students.

Pray:

Give thanks for:

✓ *for the number of Year 7's who have claimed a chocolate block rising to the Bible booknames memory challenge!*

✓ *some great mind expanding & life changing questions the students have*

✓ *the Bibles given to various students*

✓ *the co-labouring of all our partners in this Gospel enterprise*

✓ *gradual family relationship healing*

Request:

- wisdom for new Principal, Mr Ross Warren
- a growing hunger for God & His word,
- growing partnership with local churches and their youth groups
- for God to move by His Spirit through His Word to convict and convince many who sit uneasily on the fence
- further family relationship health
- for more Student Bibles to give away as gifts

