



OPEN FORUM

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Welcome to Alex and Elizabeth !

There was a joyful ceremony on Friday 13 June when our new minister was formally inducted as Minister of our church.

Rev Alex Thomas is looking forward to being Minister of the Word at Pennant Hills Uniting and plans to become part of the local community. Alex was born in Malaysia and has ministered in India, Malaysia, Singapore and Sabah (North Borneo). He came to Sydney 22 years ago and began ministry with the International Congregation at Wesley Mission in the centre of Sydney. He has since served in Croydon Park-Belfield, West Ryde, Bankstown, Panania and Menai-Illawong. So the leafy suburb of Pennant Hills will be quite different for him and his wife Elizabeth

Alex is a Police Chaplain with the Bankstown Local Area Command and has been involved in different areas of need. But he assures the congregation that his first priority is to the people he will be involved with locally.

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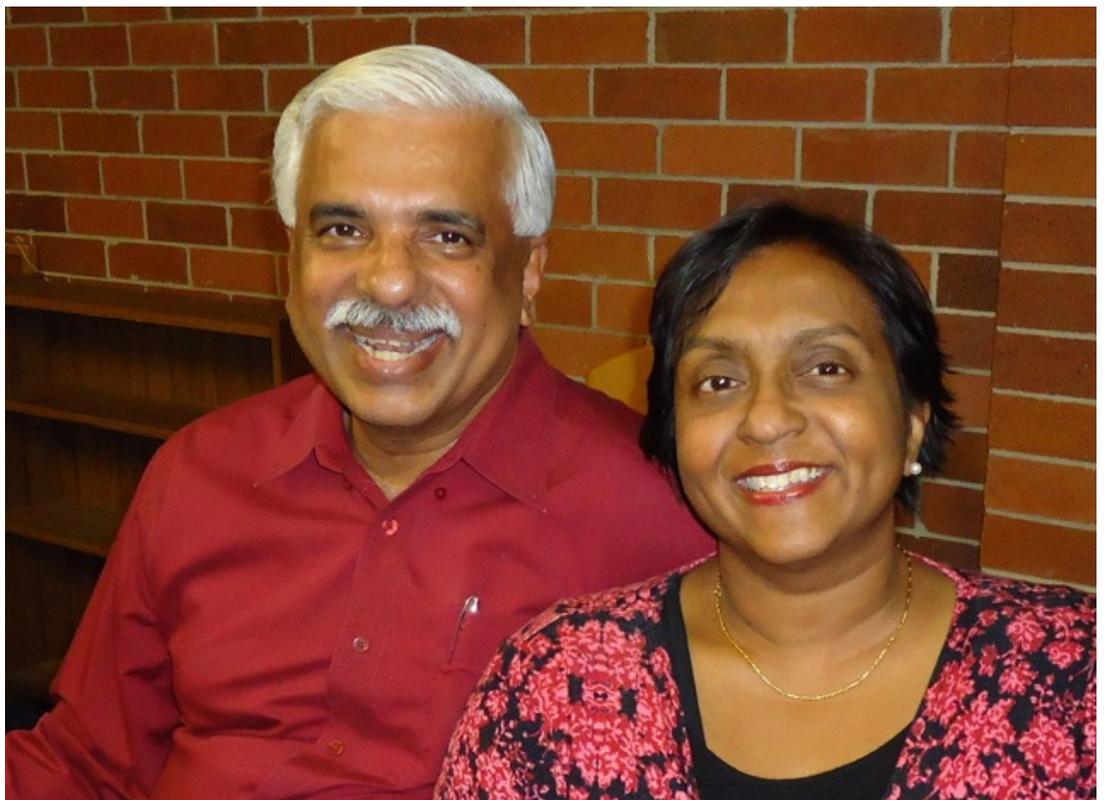
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The Thomas Family

Elizabeth was born in Ipoh to parents Doris and DR Daniel who were actively involved in the Methodist Church of Malaysia. She has twin sisters who were born 13 months later. They grew up in Kelang which is 30 minute drive from Kuala Lumpur. She is married to Alex Thomas and they have two children, Daniel and Deborah, who were both born in Kuala Lumpur.

The Thomas family lived in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, East Malaysia, before coming to Sydney in 1992. Daniel completed his degree in UWS and is a busy Events Coordinator. Deborah completed her degree in UTS Kuring gai and is married to Benjamin Rumsey. They have a daughter Zoe Diamond Rumsey who was born in February 2013. They are expecting another child in September 2014.

Elizabeth holds a Licentiate Diploma in Piano teaching and another in voice performance. She has been a piano teacher for over 20 years. She worked as a full time administrator with the Macquarie Graduate School of Management for 18 years and has been working part time in different places since. She is in between jobs currently but is very pleased to be spending 1-2 days looking after her grand-daughter.

She loves her family, playing the piano and singing. She loves her creator, Father God and is grateful because he has watched over her all these years and has blessed her tremendously.

A SURPRISE MEETING

Rev Graham Anson, Mission & Education Consultant for the Synod of NSW & ACT said he would appreciate an opportunity to talk to some of our leaders about some "good things" he hears happening at Pennant Hills!

On Thursday 29 May he met with Caryn Kneale, Peter Kneale, Norman Lees, Christine Lees, Tom Nowland, Geoff Smithson, Nora Wright and Allan Blyth with special apologies from Fenton Sharpe.

Graham's purpose was positive curiosity about how our church is thriving and looking at new initiatives when others are lethargic or in decline. He said he had noticed our banners over time and was interested in finding out more.

Those present told him the stories of the past sixteen years, since the demographics changed from a cross section of ages to an ageing attendance. These stories included the long-running Leisure & Learning for Seniors; the Statewide Symposium of Ministry to the Ageing; The Memorylink Project; Market Days and the new initiative of Boomers Ministry. We discussed how we tried to meet the needs of locals, the sense of call, and the idea of a top down approach for outreach.

Following this conversation Graham's observation was:

- that we had a sense of vision,
- that a strong person with initiative had determination to follow this through,
- that others were willing to support this initiative with action,
- that we had a sense of 'life' and a call to use our motto of 'Proclaiming Christ and Serving the Community'.

Memorylink

The roller-coaster ride of projects is always nerve-wracking and Fenton Sharpe together with the Memorylink team have been having their fair share of this lately.

Many units have been sold over the past couple of years purely through word of mouth, with glowing reviews, but the time came earlier this year to increase the order for general promotion to the world.

Changes to production caused some anxiety and deadlines for delivery were also very close. Various hiccups in the latest model also created concern. However through lots of prayer and hard work amazing things are happening.

There was major publicity when an article and advertisement appeared in Eternity Magazine which is published nationwide. According to Fenton, "We have now sold over 120 of the latest units, largely from the ETERNITY material, and enquiries and orders are still coming in almost every day. We've sold about 400 units altogether so far, as well as about 30 CDs and MP3s. One person ordered 9 MemoryLinks!

An offshoot of the article is that Fenton has been approached to talk groups about the project and this is very satisfying and encouraging fulfilling the aim of helping those who are confined to bed or home or are just seeking God's word in their lives.

On the one day, Fenton got these two messages:



"We now have the three MemoryLinks we ordered. They are just what we were hoping for. The program of hymns, choruses and Bible readings is just right for the people we are working with. Thank you for the wonderful idea and for putting it into action so successfully. May God bless you."

"Best of all is the huge appreciation and enjoyment of the MemoryLink from the friend I gave it to. She has used it herself, or asked visitors to put it on for her and she says she has loved it all. So thanks again for a brilliant way for handicapped and older folk to reach out to God".

And how about this from Canberra

Well, the 100th birthday celebration was a wonderful, happy occasion. Mum's response to her gift of the MemoryLink was very special. We 'bookmarked' Blessed Assurance because we knew it was a favourite and when we switched it on, her eyes lit up, her finger and hand starting tapping on her knee and she started to quietly sing along. At the conclusion she told us how she used to sing that all the time in church. Similar responses followed as we showed her how it all worked, with 'All things bright and beautiful' and other favourites.

Since then, my wife's sister has been helping Mum to listen more, so that is good. Thanks again for this wonderful initiative.

Blessings to you and your team.

Happenings in our Church

An Easter Adult Baptism

Easter Sunday this year was very special. Not only was the congregation celebrating the joyful news of the Resurrection but one member was particularly affected. Karlene Hale was given a full immersion baptism towards the end of the service. This was the second time the Congregation was privileged to witness this type of adult baptism and were once more in awe of the spiritual power of the ceremony.

Alan's Service of Closure

Sunday 8 June was a day of mixed emotions when Allan Blyth gave his last service as Supply Minister. What started out as a few weeks finally extended to 14 months as the search for a new Minister took longer than expected. It was a wonderful blessing that the congregation was sustained so well during this uncertain period by such an energetic and spiritually-gifted person.

Following the formality of handing over symbols of ministry as a closure during the service there was a special morning tea in the hall. It was then the turn of the Congregation to present Allan with a comfortable swivel office chair which he immediately tried out for size.

Julie was presented with a beautiful potted orchid as a thanks for her support and friendship. Both Allan and Julie feel this is their church and asked to be formally accepted as members of the congregation. They are off on a well earned holiday but we do hope to see them again in the new year.

Thank you again Allan and Julie.



Hospitality Days with Alex and Elizabeth

Over the next few months it is hoped that everyone in the congregation will be able to meet Alex and Elizabeth with a few others. Some people have offered their homes and are now trying to allocate names and dates without overwhelming the two who will be attending each party!

Please be patient – you will not miss out!

Message from the Chair of Ku-ring-gai Presbytery

The Uniting Church is living in interesting times and the Synod of NSW is particularly concerned about how we are using people, property and finance to spread the Gospel and nurture our fellow Christians.

Here is an excerpt from Rev Ann Hogan sent by email to each Congregation recently.

Dear fellow pilgrims and followers of Christ,

I am writing to you as the new Chairperson of our Presbytery. We are in a period of significant change in our Church and it is my belief that our management of those changes is helped by ensuring there is good communication between the Presbytery and congregations. At my installation on 31 May I gave a Charge to the Presbytery, a copy of which I attach for your interest. If nothing else, it will reflect my understanding of the current situation faced by the Church and my desire to seek first the Kingdom of God, following God's direction to grow our collective witness. I look forward to working alongside congregations, lay leaders and ministers to this end.....

Looking at a map of Ku-ring-gai Presbytery, I notice that many congregations are close neighbours of one another and yet the co-operation between congregations, in general, is tentative if it exists at all. Perhaps in our struggle to "survive" and to protect "our patch" from being forced to do that which we don't want do, we have lost sight of the bigger picture. Perhaps we've become so accustomed to noticing our differences we have forgotten how to enhance the things we hold in common. I believe God has a plan for the Uniting Church in our region which has more to do with living with confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ who calls us to be his representatives in the world, proclaiming good news, inviting people to an encounter with the Saviour and demonstrating the compassion, forgiveness and love of God, than with preservation of structures and tradition within the "church". These are exciting times! What will God do with us next? I wonder.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I am committed to upholding you in prayer. In addition, I pray that we may catch a glimpse of the Uniting Church we are becoming, as we together seek the Kingdom of God, working together for the sake of the Gospel, empowered by the Spirit, to the glory of God.

Grace and peace

Ann

The Church Council is now looking at the paperwork Ann mentions and hopes to prepare some comments which will be sent back to Presbytery after consultation with the rest of the Congregation. At the same time Synod is having talks across the state with a similar focus. There is a 19 page summary available if you wish to peruse it. Please contact Christine 9487 8323.



More happenings in our Church

Wednesday Communion & Lunch

The people who come on the second Wednesday of the month will let you into a secret. Not only do we have a quiet time of reflection with a short communion service but we also have fantastic food. If you have not tasted Lorna's cakes and slices you do not know what you are missing. We would love to see you there but need to know numbers for catering. Contact Peg Dunn 9484 4523.

We are also looking for others who are willing to contribute on an occasional basis. A sheet is on the notice board.

Songs of Praise

Songs of Praise this year will be held on Sunday afternoon 26 October at 2 pm and it will include the usual scrumptious afternoon tea. Please make a note of the date and help us fill the church with people and joyful music

Spring Fete - Saturday, 11th October, 2014

Market Days may be over but the first Fete for the year was a surprising success. Although the ANZAC Weekend was the selected date, people came from far and wide to see, sample and purchase. Many thanks to all who assisted prior to and on the day.

A Spring Fete Day is planned for Saturday 11 October. Now is the time to plan any contributions you may be willing to donate. Cakes, plants, crafts will all be welcome. Please save the date and invite your friends and neighbours to our church on the corner.

WANTED !

We have been very privileged to have Guy Williams as our church treasurer over the past few years and he has managed the Congregation's finances with dedication and competence. Unfortunately he is now relocating further north so another Treasurer needs to be appointed. When Guy started it was decided to provide considerable support for this important work so there is now a capable team of volunteers who do a lot of the weekly routine duties. If you feel you could take over this role or would like more information of what it entails please contact Peter Kneale or Christine Lees ASAP.

Winter in the South Seas



No one is sure why The Saturday Club decided to invite everyone to don islander shirts and straw skirts in the middle of winter but as usual those who attended came to the party in their own flamboyant way, albeit there were one or two fur coats around!

The planners once more excelled themselves with the decorations, the dinner and performances. It must have been rather startling for the new Minister Alex and his wife Elizabeth to see how uninhibited the three men, Norman, Arthur and Ian were when singing 'There's Nothin' Like Dame'.



Almost unrecognisable were the two sisters, Pat and Elaine with their renditions from the same musical.



IRENE'S ADVENTURES

Our adventuress is off travelling again later this year. Irene McMinn is planning to go to Perth, WA, for a gathering of Australian deaf blind people. Irene is the NSW representative for a group called Let's Connect and she is excited about meeting up with people who have similar circumstances to each other.

Let's Connect aims to provide assertiveness training to people with deafblindness and their families and carers. You can read more about this challenging support on their website www.ableaustralia.org.au/resourceseducation/deafblindinfo/letsconnect.

Dates for your Diary

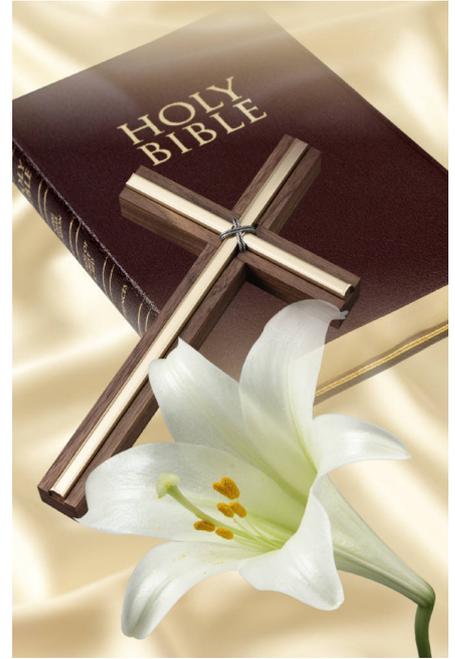
OCTOBER 2014

Saturday 11th Spring Fete 8 am

Sunday 26th Songs of Praise 2 pm

NOVEMBER 2014

Sunday 16th Following the 9:15 am Service will be the AGM
of the Congregation



Our website: www.pennanthillsuniting.org.au

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Bible Study

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Ladies Fellowship

Peg Dunn

9484 4523

Leisure and Learning

Trevor Barrett

9481 8597

Saturday Club

Pat Wheen

9484 3210

Room Bookings

Allan Bellamy

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