

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

May 2015

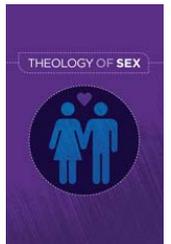
Pastoral Team Meeting

On Sunday April 19th the pastoral team of **Helen Callaghan, Robyn Pemberton, Peter McLean, Jim Thomas** and **Rod Dean** with **Cathy McLean, John Pemberton** and **Jeff Callaghan** gathered at the Pemberton's to discuss the needs and issues, realities, and future thinking about our area.

Everyone is encouraged to read **Sydney Congregation - Our Future Together** which can be found on the church web site under **About Us**. This document is what we send to the office and each year it is reviewed. So if you would like to comment on it, please let Rod Dean know.

One of the concerns we have is the need to make sure we can provide speakers for each service and also give the those serving the congregation a break. Recently we have given a break for months having a fifth Saturday. We are now adding to this with a three week break at the end of the year, cancelling the Saturday service May 23rd before the Sunday May 24th Pentecost service, and cancelling the Saturday service September 26th before the Ulladulla festival. This will mean that we can maintain our speaking schedule locally and to the regions with the present speakers. Skype adds a supplementary opportunity for the outlying regions.

In our society, it is often asked what is the church's theology on sex. A booklet that wrestles with various questions is NAE's booklet, "The Theology of Sex" at <http://www.nae.net/church-and-faith-partners/projects/generation-forum/theology-of-sex>.



We wish to acknowledge the on-going generosity of the area towards overseas mission. The support sent has been a major source of encouragement to those labouring in very difficult circumstances. This helps build a strong kinship with our international congregations. Recently at the Mission developers Conference held in South Africa **John McLean** wrote "**Emmanuel Okai** from Ghana in particular wants to pass on his gratitude to Sydney and the other Australian congregations that have helped the work of the church there." We will endeavour to maintain all our commitments.

We recognize that everyone has a life outside the four walls of the church. Thus we have to be realistic about what we all can do. We appreciate the contribution our young people are making and wish to support them as they build connections around Australia so that we can discern where God is leading our churches into the future.

Women's Refuge Toiletry Bags

Another delivery of over one hundred toiletry bags was made last month to the Bonnie Women's Refuge in Canley Heights. Workers at the Refuge were delighted with bright colours of the new range of bags we have sourced, knowing how valuable is every little effort to bring cheer into the lives of these women and children traumatized by domestic violence.

Last year we asked the Refuge management if we were able to use their Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) charity status to help us obtain donated goods from large organizations such as supermarkets. GCI has charity status, but not the DGR status which many companies require before they will donate. Last week the Refuge contacted us to let us know that, although they would be willing to work with us in this way, they had searched through their legislation and found that their taxation constraints do not allow for them to do this. They continue to be grateful for our regular support over the years.

Thank you to everyone who donated goods or cash and helped assemble the bags.

Deanna Fleming



Recently a ceremony was held at Miranda to honour nine recipients of NSW Senior's Week Local Achievements Awards for the Sutherland Shire. **Deanna Fleming** of the Sydney congregation was one of these.

Miranda MP **Barry Collier** said the recipients represented "the diversity of talent, generosity of spirit and limitless energy of seniors in the shire."

Congratulations to Deanna for a wonderful example of quiet service! To read more fully about what Deanna does, please look up the April 2012 *Church Matters* on the church's web site.

Connect Camp 2015

2 - 5 JULY

If you're in Year 11 or over, come and join us for our annual youth and young adults camp in Belgrave, Victoria!

... more on Web.



Australian Day of Thanksgiving

Celebrate the National Day of Thanksgiving - 30 May 2015!

The National Day of Thanksgiving is a unique opportunity for Australians to celebrate and give thanks for our God-given heritage as a nation and to demonstrate the God-given values of honour, respect, thankfulness and gratitude towards our fellow man that have made us the great nation we are.

Our suggestions for 2015 are to thank and honour people in the following areas:

Fathers, Father Figures, and Mentors. They play such an important role in our lives and particularly the lives of our children. And those people working in Finance departments of Not-for-Profit Organisations and Charities — Bookkeepers, Accountants, Bank Staff, Treasurers of Sporting and Social groups, and people working in Financial Support areas and Debt Counselling.



The PNG pastors said on the last trip that they liked the Bible Studies written by **Michael Morrison**. **Margaret McGregor** loves to publish and she was the obvious fit to provide a new resource for PNG. She has made books containing a full collection of these. Thank you Margaret.

Preparations for PNG Trip

At the same time, edited materials on pastoring from *You're Included* interviews with **David Torrance** and **Andrew Purves**, edited materials on youth work by **Jeff McSwain** and **Andrew Root**, as well as suitable material used at US camps are being put together. Camp games and ideas from the Australian SEP are being selected for possible future camps in PNG. Recently we heard that our young adults in Mt Wilhelm are contributing more and more to the life of the church and to the weekly service. That is encouraging news.

The present plan is that **Mark** and **Rod** will go up on July 18th and return August 2nd. We have written a letter to Air Niugini asking for assistance with excess luggage problems. We do seek to make these trips as productive as possible and this necessitates quite a lot of excess luggage. In previous years we have been kindly permitted to take extra weight without any charges but this stopped last year. Thus we are reapplying for this official help. Please pray for a positive outcome.

We will be purchasing a coffee grinder here for the coffee shop and other needed items to finish our projects. We will be looking at buying up there materials for the orphanage toilet and blankets for the men's haus. The budget will be done shortly. It is envisaged that some time in the future we will only have visits every two years. This will depend on improvement in communication between PNG and Australia.

One of the major social problems, which is also true in Australia, is violence toward women. Churches can be a major influence in changing attitudes as this comment from a report shows:

Some churches in Papua New Guinea encourage greater marital egalitarianism by invoking the principle of mutual submission. For example, a Church of God (?) pastor in the Southern Highlands said that, rather than the traditional requirement in marriage being that the woman must obey the man, this was necessary for both husband and wife.

As he observed: The man must be underneath the woman all the time. The woman must be underneath the man. If the woman says something, the man must listen and follow it. If the man says something, the woman must listen and follow it. The married couple must act like one body.

This stress on equality between men and women provides a framework for men to 'do' gender differently from prevailing models. The practice may often fall short of complete gender equality, but it has lessened some of the harsh treatment women have received in the past.

Material on this problem is being prepared to share with the pastors and leaders.

We have heard that the local MP is planning to fix up the hydro power system at the Catholic vocational school and near our church.

This means a grader could be coming up and that would affect the timing of the road project. It would be nice if the grader does some of the work for the road project. One can only hope all of this actually happens.

Services

Saturday, May 23rd cancelled in Wollongong and Sydney.

Pentecost starts 2.30 pm at our normal venue on Sunday May 24th.

Services in Wollongong and Sydney will be cancelled on May 30th.

