

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

March 2016

We will be back this year with the Christian Highway Church, 240 Princes Highway Ulladulla. We start at 3.00pm Monday, October 17th, through to Monday, October 24th. Sunday will be the day off.

Ulladulla 2016

Festival 2016

The Mighty Waterfall of God's Grace

*"Where sin increased, grace increased all the more
(Romans 5:20b)*

We are a joyful people because we increasingly know the graciousness of the Father who wants us to abide in him and to be at home with him.



Psalm 1 uses an image about a tree being planted by a stream of running water. It's a psalm of the exile. It's all desert — emotionally, spiritually desert, but also physically it's desert. And yet the Psalmist used, "In the Lord you will be like a tree planted by a stream of running water."

Andrew Purves:

In Romans 5, Paul talks about grace. Overflowing. Three times he says, "Grace overflows." *Perisseia*. Again he says grace overflows, and the third time he puts it in the superlative — grace super-overflows *hyperperisseuō* — it's a Niagara Falls of grace, not just a little trickle-down effect. With this huge grace, sin has no chance.

*⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.
(Col. 2:6-7)*

Grace is a life overflowing with thankfulness. What a wonderful energy system —gratitude, thankfulness. A thankful person is not a dull person. A thankful person is a person full of the joy and the energy of the gospel.

The grace of Christ is not freedom from obedience, it's a gracious obedience given to us to empower us.

Mike Feazell:

That good news is not some kind of sloppy permissiveness. It's not some like, "Okay, I'll just forgive you, and you're off the hook." It's an accountability. Grace...because Christ is our life, sin would be to say, no, he's not. But he *is* our life, he is living our life for us, and there is an accountability to that grace.

The church is a group of people who want to live into this reality; they want to help each other and hold each other accountable.

In Titus, Paul is writing to Titus and he says, "Grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness." (Tit. 2:12)

Whatever obedience is required of us, we already have the obedience of Jesus to empower us. By the Holy Spirit we are brought into the life of Jesus in his obedience.

At this festival we want to experience the overflowing graciousness of God with overflowing thankfulness and joy.

Special Services

Sydney congregation will hold the Lord's Supper at its normal venue on Thursday night, 21st April, beginning at 7.30pm.

Wollongong will be at its normal venue beginning at 7.00pm.

First Day of Unleavened Bread will be as part of our normal services on April 23: "If Christ is not raised we are still in our sins."

The last Day of Unleavened Bread will be on Friday, 29th April at Ermington Community Centre in the small meeting room: "Dealing with sin among Christians."



PNG Children's Church

During one prayer in one of the church services you could hear in the background the beautiful voices of the children singing praises to God in another building. The driving force behind the children's church at Mt Wilhelm is **Bauna Lee**. She is a vibrant lady, always smiling, with enormous energy, who has suffered a lot in her life. She is like many of the ladies in Mt Wilhelm who have found a safe place in the church. They are a spiritually maturing and a forward looking group. The day **Mark** and **Rod** were there, 22 children were present. They can have up to 30. Not all the parents attend. Bauna Lee asked Mark and Rod to visit the children before the session started so they could bless the group. Then they had fun for a while playing the 'crocodile' game and introducing 'stone, paper, scissors.' At present there are two teachers but they are encouraging two of the young women to come and help in the future. They have been using the resources purchased last year. The children's church is in English. The format is:

Welcome/encouragement to participate	Then new story from the Bible
Opening 3-4 Songs	Lessons — drawing out of resource book
Opening Prayer	Final Song
Ask for any needs in prayer	Closing Prayer.
Review story from last week	



Bauna teaches the children to sing with their heart, to be thankful since God gives us many things and we have empty hands before him. She explains the meaning of the songs so that they have understanding in their mind about who God is.



They use plays to instruct. The one they did when **Rod Matthews** was there was Building up the Temple. They sang 'The Foundation of the Church.' They have performed special music in church services.

Bauna Lee has a dream for the church complex. She would like to do teacher training and start a school on the property. She already has one kindergarten teacher with 12 children who would come immediately. Add to this church children and others starting in the lower grades she feels it would not be long for a school to develop. We do have **Arnold** who has started a school and one of the pastors **Richard** is vice principal of the school up the road attached to the Mercy of Life orphanage.



So there is experience that can advise of the feasibility of the idea. However, the buildings will not be ready and safe for a school for at least another two years. But it reflects the energy and sense of purpose growing in the Mt Wilhelm congregation.

Prayers for PNG Orphanage

Rod asked **Martin** what were their hopes and dreams for the future of the orphanage.

Martin's concerns:

They need government subsidy. They did receive a new classroom from Digicel, the mobile phone carrier.

Other building needs include:

- a dining hall
- one more dormitory to separate older boys and girls
- two teacher house
- any means of electricity supply for the centre
- they would like government or an organization to branch the project to other districts or provinces in PNG. The need is great in PNG.

The present major concern is that while most of the support for school fees has come from Christian individuals in Europe they are ageing and dying off. So where will they get their next source of funding for school fees or other needs?

We are committed to providing water for their shower and flush toilets.

