

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

June 2017

Joyce Harris 1920-2017

Joyce Mewton was born at Picton, NSW in 1920, one of eight children, who all got along extremely well. She outlived all her siblings by many years. She was 97 when she passed away on 12th April 2017, at *St Catherine's Aged Care Facility*, Bathurst, of pneumonia.

Despite her leaving school aged 14 she developed a considerable intellect, through her love of reading, particularly poetry and a great love of history. She worked at a number of jobs prior to her marriage. This included La Sybil Salon, one of the top fashion houses. She won several awards for her selling skills, and was very popular amongst her workmates owing to her friendly and helpful nature.

From 1941 until 1944 Joyce worked at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory where munitions were made for WW2. She married **Jack Harris** in 1948 at Haberfield, Sydney. They had two children, **Lee** and **Adrian**.

Joyce suffered with very poor eyesight due to a rare complaint, and new and even experimental treatments and drugs like Cortisone were tried to cure this, with some small success. From age 30 onwards she struggled to read her beloved books but persevered using a magnifying glass to do so. In her latter years she was legally blind but managed to do what had to be done, and continued to read avidly right up until her early nineties.

She was very enterprising, sewing, making preserves, and occasionally writing short stories and poetry, some of which were published. Her great sense of humour shone through despite bad eyesight and occasional poor health.

She taught herself to play piano, piano accordion, organ, tin whistle and recorder. While at Orange Joyce started teaching basket weaving, forming the 'Endeavour Club', which brought people together, creating friendship and enterprise. Together Jack and Joyce continued making various colourful and functional baskets after they retired. Many of these were sold to businesses such as 'The Cot King.'

She attended the Church Festivals with Jack from 1964 until 1986 without fail, travelling to New Zealand, Tasmania and the UK for some of these. At times when Joyce had particularly painful eyes she was anointed and on several occasions God intervened very powerfully to take away the severe pain she had been experiencing. On some occasions this happened almost immediately. Her faith and belief in God helped her immeasurably through an often difficult and challenging life.

They attended Church together at several sites including Newcastle, Blackheath, Wallsend. After Jack died in 1987, Joyce moved to Bathurst and attended the Church there while she was able. At ninety-two Joyce moved into *St Catherine's Aged Care Facility*, where she was cared for extremely well.

Joyce was one who persevered — she didn't let things beat her. She was not a quitter, and that led to her industrious existence and a life full of achievement.

Rod Dean said at the funeral:

My wife and I were a newly married couple, fresh out of Ambassador College. One of the first people we met in ministry were Jack and Joyce Harris who lived in Toukley.

They would have been in their fifties with grown up children. But they couldn't have been more gracious and hospitable to us — young people in our twenties. It was always a joy to share together our walk with God.

Many years later, in fact only several years ago, I had the pleasure of having Joyce attend our monthly service in Bathurst. Despite the various health issues that come with getting older, Joyce asked sharp and pertinent questions during our Bible Studies. She was a believer throughout the time I knew her.



SEP 2018

We are thrilled to announce that our youth summer camp is back in January 2018. All young people 13 to 18 are invited to be part of this incredible adventure of fun, friendship and faith.



This year SEP moves to a new home! In fact, we're returning to a much-loved stomping ground of previous SEP generations: Campaspe Downs in Kyneton, Victoria! The last time we held (... *Cont'd on p 2*)

As a fellowship, none of us are immune from 'age-creep.' And now Sydney GCI has three more members sporting the 'retiree' label — and no doubt we'll have more in coming years.

While having lived myself under the same banner for nearly 10 years, it's become clear to me that there is no one-size-fits-all in this unusual and challenging phase of life, be you male or female.

Rob Farrar, Ruth Garratt and Maggy Coen are the latest names added to our retiree list.

Remembering that in ages past, people (men especially) just worked until they either dropped, or their children considered they weren't up to scratch anymore and so had to make way for the 'youngies.' Being put out to pasture was the least painful way to go 'a-retiring.'

In our modern world other factors come into play. Companies suffer take-overs; redundancies are common; firms close and others move off-shore. Likewise, you can also be sandwiched between a rock and a hard place if you're approaching 'end-of-use-by-date,' as employers see it. Being 'let go' at a crucial time of your life can force retirement — want it or not.

With all this in mind I gave our retiring trio thought-starters with which to share their new-path experience. Here, briefly, are some of their observations.

Rob Farrar ended a 50-year career last year and is yet to figure out what to do next. Starting at age 17 in an accounting office, he worked fulltime but studied at night and spent holidays preparing for exams to become a qualified Chartered Accountant, eventually morphing into a Business Analyst — someone who designs computer systems from scratch for high-profile clients such as banks — despite his not having any formal qualifications for such a demanding role.



Early in his career he also worked in a band on weekends, something he loved. "I still play with those guys occasionally and it's great fun", he admits.

In retirement Rob tried copy-writing but found it very stressful. Joining a *Men's Shed* group to work on a community garden and teach guitar has been more to his liking. Meeting past work colleagues and working on sermons adds spice and challenge as well.

Determined to play the retirement score "by ear" Rob, like many of us, continues to see God's hand in his past career while trusting Him for that which lies ahead.

Ruth Garratt suffered retrenchment in August 2016 from Tien Wah Press, a Singapore-based printing company after a 12 year stint that followed her role as a full-time mum and home-school teacher to her three boys. "I could see the writing on the wall so the parting didn't come as a shock," she says. "I valued the time-off for son **Zane's** wedding to **Eilish** last December and to prepare for extended trips with my brothers.



Last January she volunteered one day a week for the *Exodus Foundation* serving meals to the homeless "and I'm taking a UK trip throughout June, which has taken time organising."

She hasn't sensed any loss since stopping full-time work, finding each day full in itself. Flexibility is important "but establishing a routine is the hardest discipline when you're at home", she maintains. If she can't find one or two days a week work soon, Ruth will seek volunteer work again "as there are dozens of organisations crying out for help."

The retirement journey for **Maggy Coen** is being marked by relocation from Blackheath in the Blue Mountains to a livelier pace of living in Sydney which she left 17 years ago to join the Blackheath community, opening a second-hand shop soon after arriving there.



The last six years leading to retirement saw Maggy as a support worker for people with disabilities in her small community, where she kept up with many 'locals,' clients and co-workers when in town.

"But in moving east, God has blessed me so much by providing a flat in a great location very near to my family and friends," she beams. "While I loved living in Blackheath, I find I need to attend church regularly without driving a 200 km round trip to Bathurst to be part of our little gathering there.

What will she miss in re-locating? "I'll miss those wonderful people, great services — and great food!" she says, "and the cool (but not the very cold) weather of the mountains region."

For her new time ahead in Sydney, Maggy's retirement outlook is simple and positive, looking forward to warmer, sunny days "good, cheap restaurants and much happening around me."

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Thanks to Ian (See Mark 4:35-41) 06-23-2006
JUST GIVE ME FIVE MORE MINUTES

SEP

(Cont'd from p1)

camp at Campaspe, '90s fashion was all the rage. The campsite has an outdoor oval, an indoor basketball court, and an indoor pool for some additional activities this SEP. We can't wait to share this campsite with a whole new generation of SEP campers.

Join us 1 - 9 January 2018 for the best week of your summer!

Any questions? Email sep@gci.org.au — we would love to hear from you! Applications open soon, for campers and staff.