

UNFOLDING

PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

GBC

ISSUE 9



A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

Each year we select a theme for the year ahead. It is generally a word picture that describes both where we are, but also expresses some of our hope for the future. In 2019 our theme is Unfolding. Its origin is in Psalm 106:13, "But they soon forgot what He had done and did not wait for His plans to unfold." This psalm narrates the failure of the people of Israel to take to heart the promises of the Lord that contained His plans (albeit in seedling form). These promises included the promise to rescue them from Egypt and bring them into the land of Canaan (it's called the Promised Land for a reason!), but also to enter into a relationship with them that would ultimately bring a blessing to all nations. The people of Israel failed to trust His promises or wait for his plans to unfold.

The image of unfolding – be it a piece of paper or a flower – carries with it a promise of revelation; of fulfilment; of completion. As a church we want to look forward to the unfolding promises of God in our midst and trust His promises to us. In particular, the grand promise that He will make all things new (Revelation. 21:5).

A commitment to wait for God's plans to renew all things in Christ to unfold does not, however, mean passively waiting, but an active posture of anticipation and readiness. This is due to the mysterious and spine-tingling reality that each of us is being continually invited to participate in these same plans. We are more than spectators to what God is doing, but agents, actors and participants in that work.

It is my desire that we would be a community of first responders; ready to take up the invitation of the Holy Spirit to join in with His renewing work. As such, we want to attune our hearts and minds to be attentive to His gentle whisper. In short, we want to be ready to step into the unfolding plans of God all around us.

In the following pages you'll read about where we hope to see God at work in 2019. I hope that what you read encourages, inspires, and excites you as much as it does me.

God bless,
Marc

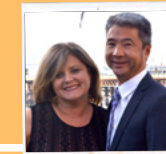
SERVICES

Gathering on a Sunday as a church family to study the Word, worship God and have fellowship together is an awesome way to start the week! As we delve into our Unfolding Series in 2019, it's great to be reminded of the way God unfolds His plans in our lives. Hearing the stories of the way God is moving in other people's lives is so encouraging, and reminds us to listen for God's leading and to notice the little "coincidences" in our everyday circumstances where He moves and leads us.

With the start of 2019 there have been some changes to our Services Team. The appointment of Carolyn Wang as Services Coordinator, and Steph Vanden Hengel as Section Leader for Worship brings

something fresh and new to the Services Team. We look forward to seeing the consolidation of all the great things that happened in 2018 under Shandri Brown's leadership, and we look with expectancy to what God unfolds this year. This year we will also be filming the Exodus series for the Australian Christian Channel which serves the wider Australian church community.

They say it takes a village to raise a child; we believe it takes a whole community contributing to raise a vibrant and healthy church. To play your part in God's mission at GBC, and become involved in this ministry (music, vocals, sound, lighting, vision, Bible reading and prayer) check out the Serve page on GBC Links.



Carolyn's story

I've been attending GBC for most of my life, and have been involved in worship ministry for the past 20 years. I feel extremely blessed to be a musician, and able to serve God and others through music.

I'm excited about my new role as Services Coordinator. Having felt a strong sense to put my teaching

career on hold and seek God for something new, I believe there was an unfolding of God's plan for my life in my appointment. In waiting for new direction, I was able to find rest, lean into God more, learn patience and what trusting in Him really means.

God's plans are not always what

we expect but He knows best and His timing is perfect. Since my appointment, God has reminded me numerous times that I have been called to this role for "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)

I'm looking forward to what God will do within the Services Team in 2019.



YOUTH & FAMILIES

2019 has us in a state of anticipation and excitement at the possibilities of what God is doing in the life of our children and youth here at GBC. Our kids' ministry is developing new and creative ways of incorporating our strategic priorities into our Sunday morning programs. We hope to provide opportunities for our young people to explore and cultivate their leadership here at GBC. Our prayer as a church is to grow in our capacity to engage the whole family unit in seeing young lives changed by Jesus.

Along with the wider church community, our youth are also pursuing the unfolding plans of God in each of their lives. By expanding on the time we have

together on a Friday night, the youth are able to unpack and share where they are seeing Jesus at work in their life and the invitation He extends to each of us. We are so eager to see how God is going to work in the lives of these young people during this term, and at our annual GBC YOUTH Camp in March. At EDGE, our Wednesday program, we have already seen a growing number of youth stepping up to serve and lead others.

With our Young Adults community starting a new ConnectGroup, which will meet monthly, it is clear to see that God has an incredible plan in place for the younger generation of our church. We wait expectantly as it unfolds before us, in all His glory.

CARE, CONNECT AND GROWING

One of the clearest invitations we receive from God in the Bible, is to explore God's unfolding plans for how we care, connect and grow as followers of Jesus. Loving God and loving our neighbour not only sums up God's best way to live, but is outworked when we join in with God in these key areas for us as a church.

For newcomers to GBC one of the best ways to connect, but also to discover how to join in with God's mission, is through Pathways. After our pilot program last year, our first Pathways course for 2019 kicks off in March. You can register for Pathways through GBC Links.

Towards the end of last year, we appointed five new elders to the team that form a central part

of congregational care here at GBC. Rhonda Montgomery, Ron Clarke, Derek Mullins, Sonia Beresford, Leanne Carter, Ian Giles and Esther Pratten, are all committed to helping our community better care for one another and experience the change Jesus brings. In addition to our team of elders, we will shortly start to see a new team of seating hosts in our services, whose aim is to notice and connect with those who attend on a Sunday. Alongside GBC Cares, these new developments are designed to help all who attend GBC to experience Jesus' genuine care and desire to connect with them; and this, we believe is a vital part of seeing people step into and grow through God's unfolding plans.

Check out Mark's interaction with GBC Cares below.



Left to right, back row
Ron, Ian, Derek, Sonia,
Left to right front row,
Esther, Leanne,
Rhonda.



Mark's story

Hi, I'm Mark Russell, a new Section Leader in Kidzone. My wife Sheryl and my 3 daughters joined GBC in May last year upon relocating to Oyster Bay. We attend the 8.30am service

and are already starting to feel at home at GBC. I'll be Section Leader for the school age kids and volunteers, and bring around 13 years of experience in kids ministry. I'm also volunteering at

the church every Thursday and am currently a part time theology student at Morling College. God willing, I hope to enter the Baptist Accreditation Program at the end of this year.



Mark's story

Early in the new year I found myself crippled by a spinal condition that flares up from time to time. I am not used to asking for help, but couldn't avoid it this time because I was unable to stand long enough even to prepare something to eat. I sent

an email to GBC Cares requesting some help with food and meals. The meals team, inspired by God's invitation to care for others, were fantastic at a time when I really needed it. The meals supplied not only satisfied my hunger and were delicious, but also gave me the

nutrition I needed to repair and heal. Thank you so much to those who prepared me the amazing meals - I honestly don't know what I would have done otherwise! It is comforting to know there are people looking out for you. What a blessing - God is good!



CAPITAL WORKS

In November we will be seventy years old as a community of faith. The original community that started as a Sunday School had a vision to be a light on the highway. This vision was not just about visibility but about the transforming power of the good news about Jesus. Things have certainly changed over the last seventy years but the power of the gospel remains as does our vision to share that good news with our world.

It was the gospel that motivated the construction of our original worship space in 1962 and the Christian Education Centre five years later. It was the gospel that motivated the construction of our new worship space ten years ago. And now it's time for the next stage; the redevelopment of our old facilities to transform them into a community friendly space

that will facilitate ministry for the next generation of believers here.

In 2019 we hope to see the unfolding blueprint of this new ministry centre move several steps towards becoming a reality. Initial (and ambitious) plans have been taken to Council for a pre-DA meeting and we are awaiting the official report. The Capital Works Team is preparing a detailed cost analysis for the next step to be presented at our AGM on Sunday March 31.

This is as big a step as the original buildings were for the fledgling community of faith that would become Gynea Baptist Church, but one that is motivated by the same unchanging belief in the transformative power of the good news.



THE Bible Together

An invitational way to read the Bible

For more information see the Resources tab in GBC Links or pick up a postcard at church.

One of the ways we can attune our hearts and minds to God's unfolding plans is through the Word. We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that the same Spirit which superintended its transmission is at work in our lives to teach and lead us (John 16:12-15).

When we read the Bible we aren't just studying an ancient and interesting text but are listening to the voice of God. Whilst reading and studying the Bible alone is a good discipline, there is also great value in reading the Bible with others. When we do, we are reading it as it was meant to be read – most of the Bible was written to groups of people and usually read aloud to the recipients. Beyond that, there is in-built accountability that comes when we read with other people and the encouragement that comes

from other perspectives and experiences.

In 2019 we are encouraging everyone to read the Bible with someone else (or a small group). To do this we are advocating a simple, observational method of reading the Bible that is wrapped around four questions: What stood out to you? What don't you understand? What might God be inviting you to do? And, Who might you tell?

The emphasis of this method is not on commenting on all that stands out to us, or in answering all our questions, but upon listening – together – for the invitation of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. As a staff team we are adopting this method in our weekly devotions and are hoping that everyone might join us in listening for the voice of God.



LOCAL MISSION

Where is God at work in our local community? How can we participate with Him in what He is doing in our families, neighbourhoods, social groups and schools?

The GBC Carols committee does a fabulous job every year of blessing the people of the Sutherland Shire with a fun-filled, professional event. COACH continues to train mentors and help connect them with people who need some support in their life decisions. The Fathering Project (launched at GBC last year) aims to inspire and equip father figures to strengthen relationships with their kids, and has several events planned for 2019.

In our schools, we have Scripture teachers sharing God's love with new classes at Bates Drive and GyMEA North, with the number of children participating remaining high. There is also ongoing

demand for Kids Hope mentors to spend one hour a week with a child at Kareela or Grays Point, building their self-esteem and resilience.

Our GBC Catalyst team keeps us updated on issues relating to poverty and injustice, including how we can take practical steps to 'Be the Change'. The Southern Grace Op Shop volunteers are giving their time and enthusiasm to assist Southern Community Welfare to support our community in many ways. Finally, our Playtime groups are again operating every morning of the week to provide a friendly, caring environment for local parents and grandparents with young children.

There are many ways in which we can serve those around us everywhere we go. See the Serve page on GBCLinks for more information about any of these ministries.



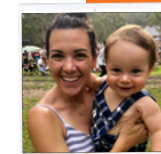
GLOBAL MISSION

Mission relates to being sent (John 20:21) and God's invitation is not limited to a few people, going to particular places: he calls 'everyone to everywhere'. God's plan for the restoration and renewal of all things invites followers of Jesus to see where He is already at work and participate with Him. It will take infinite acts of love, faith and service to fulfill His plan - where is He sending you?

In November 2018, the GBC community and Southern Community Welfare (SCW) joined with 5000 people in the Sutherland Shire White Ribbon Walk against domestic violence, which is an awful reality in many Australian households. In the first half of 2018, 1919 cases in the Shire were referred on by police. SCW is one of the organisations that works on the frontline to support restoration of families

in these circumstances. In 2019, it unfortunately continues to be one of Australia's biggest issues. We believe that all people are created in God's image, loved and valued by their Creator, and should be treated with equal regard. As a community we will continue to advocate for a better future where there is no place for violence.

For May Mission Month 2019, we will be taking a faithful step to raise financial support for five projects and our GBC supported missionaries. The projects include The Bible Society (translation and literacy program, Vietnam), Mother's Heart (Crisis Pregnancy Support, Cambodia), Baptist World Aid (Syrian Assist, Lebanon), FEBC (Breaking Domestic Violence cycle, Mongolia) and The Eve Project (Thriving Futures Program, Illawarra).



Lordie's story

I've been part of the Mission Action Group for five years. I joined because mission had always interested me. I wasn't in a position to go out and do something extravagant, however this was how I could contribute to doing something significant.

I've learned a lot about global mission, how agencies operate on the ground, what are best practices for development and challenges. I've met different people on team and also had conversations with people across the church that I wouldn't have normally met.

I left the team to have my first child' so took a year's break. Coming back into the team is fresh and exciting as we have new direction, new practices and it is so professional - it's awesome to be part of it! If you're interested in mission, it is such a good time to join the team - it's got an exciting future!.

For information on the Mission Action Group Team member roles, visit the Serve page on GBCLinks, then click on Global Mission.



Richard's story

What a surprise! Friday is now my favourite day of the week. Hanging out with our granddaughters and other kids at Playtime is just great fun.

Bashing on a workbench, setting up the wooden trainset or playing with the massive toy selection is an opportunity a 'nearly' old man rarely gets. And making new friends, each experiencing their own life challenges,

has been a real bonus. Sharing everyday stories...just fantastic!

Playtime has been for me one of the easiest and most significant opportunities to express the love of God to others and is an amazing incubator for faith in our wider community.

Mums, and the occasional dad,

rock up with their kids often just to connect with others in the hope of finding some solace, comfort and the discovery that "hey I'm not the only one dealing with these issues".

It's a lot of fun and I pray that God continues to use Playtime to build His kingdom.

Bring on Friday!





SOUTHERN COMMUNITY WELFARE

February 2019 marks twenty years since Southern Community Welfare was incorporated. We plan to celebrate this on Thursday, 13th June with our Celebration Dinner – don't forget to save the date. 2019 also sees SCW move into the second year of delivering against its strategic plan – Flourishing Communities.

One of the key priorities in the plan is to establish a Community Hub. This year, we will consolidate the community hub programs from Cronulla. These programs will include an evening meal service, run in partnership with One Meal, for rough sleepers and the disadvantaged. This will happen every Thursday, and starts this month. It will also expand the group programs that began in pilot form last year for isolated men, to support other vulnerable community members. By next month, in partnership with other organisations, we will also begin hosting a Community Hub day. This will be a collaborative monthly event working closely with organisations like Centrelink and NSW Housing and will be targeting some of the most marginalised people across the Shire. Of course, our individual intensive support also continues.

The year is also off to a fast start on the clinical side of the service, with four new psychologists, counsellors and an intern joining the existing team, and the Southern Grace Op Shop is also in full swing, operating in Cronulla.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

This month we ran our first community event from Cronulla. Following a presentation by Southern staff last year, the residents from Donald Robinson Village, Kirrawee expressed an interest in continuing to support SCW.

We hosted a group of lively and energetic seniors from the Village at an exclusive shopping event in the Southern Grace Op Shop, followed by a Devonshire Tea. The morning was marked with a great sense of fun and community.

Residents shopped and then enjoyed a sing-a-long to old time songs played by our amazingly talented domestic violence counsellor Sue Chin, followed by trivial pursuit run by Kerry Moss. The residents also donated to our Manna Pantry (used to provide free groceries to people in need), and also gave a generous financial donation.

Over 30 people came along to support Southern Community Welfare from the Village.

It was a great way to mark the beginning of a new year and the first of many more activities designed to build community as we participate in the unfolding of God's plans.



FINANCES

The Partnership Newsletter takes its name from Philippians 1:4-5, "In all my prayers for you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."

Their partnership together in the gospel was demonstrated in a shared passion for the spread of the good news, in the desire to keep each other in the loop about their circumstances, and in the Philippians' financial assistance of Paul and his ministry. Paul speaks glowingly of their willingness to support him, not only while he was imprisoned, but in other circumstances (Phil. 4:14-16).

Financial partnership in the gospel is still at the heart of the vision and purpose of the church. Our financial contribution is one way we respond to the invitation of God to be involved in his redeeming work in the world.

Your financial support of GBC and its ministries enables us to reach out to hundreds of children,

young people, and their families; facilitates the ongoing training, equipping, and releasing of people into all corners of our community; and enables our service to the community of faith both here and abroad.

As we start the year I want to urge you, as partners in the gospel, to participate in God's work financially. This is one of the simplest ways to join in with what God is doing in our midst.

More details on how to begin giving are available on GBC Links. We encourage electronic giving.

Bank: Baptist Financial Services
Account: Gymea Baptist Church
BSB No: 704 922
Account No: 100 006 024



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