

Answered my prayer



Brought me to faith



Showed me my purpose



Healed my friend



# WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN GOD AT WORK?

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PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

GBC

ISSUE 10





## A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

**Anticipation (n):** *the action of anticipating something; expectation*

Where have you seen God at work? To be honest this question sparks a little bit of spiritual anxiety in my heart. The anxiety is that there's something wrong or deficient in my spirituality if I haven't seen God at work. Maybe you relate to this feeling?

Despite the slight discomfort of this question, I am committed to continue to ask it of myself and our community of faith. There are a few motivations behind this commitment. First, a bit of discomfort is not the end of the world and often provides the inspiration to grow. Second, hearing others talk about where they have seen God at work encourages me to keep my eyes, ears and heart open to where God is at work. Third, and perhaps most significantly, asking this question reminds me that it's not my spirituality, righteousness, persistence, awareness, or

dedication that moves God to action; He is always at work. When we feel anxious about what our answer says about us, we have turned the question around to be about us; an all too common tendency.

In reality, this question ought to heighten our anticipation that we will experience God at work. What I find so interesting about anticipation is that it is a noun that describes an action. How can we act in anticipation of God's activity in our lives and in the lives of those to whom He sends us? This is one of the questions we want to address in this issue of the Partnership Newsletter and I trust you will be encouraged to greater anticipation by what you read in its pages.

Where have you seen God at work?

**God bless,  
Marc**

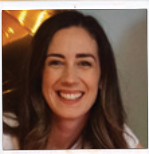
## SERVICES

Our Sunday Services continue to be a precious time spent together to worship, pray, read the Word, hear from Him and be inspired to serve. Throughout this season we have heard many stories of where God has been at work, we have learnt to claim the promises of God and to look for ways He is inviting us into His mission.

Easter was a significant time of reflection and joyful celebration as we meditated on the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus paid for us. On Easter Sunday, we celebrated with Lisa McGovern, Jess Holt, Dan McOrist and Christine Moffat as they were baptized. It is so encouraging to hear individual testimonies of how God brings His people into a deeper relationship and to see them declare their faith publicly.

The Worship team has continued to serve faithfully, bringing us into a place each week where we can find space to focus on God's love and goodness, and declare our praises to Him. Steph VandenHengel and the Worship Steering Committee continue to lead the team with an incredible amount of passion. What a joy it is to lift up His Name together as a community of faith.

There are many opportunities to contribute to Sunday Services at GBC (Music, Sound, Vision, Lights, Bible Reading, Prayer, Welcoming, Coffee, Stewarding, Communion). Simply head to the 'Serve' page on GBC Links to fill in an application form, or talk to Carolyn Wang if you feel God is inviting you to serve in some way through the Sunday Services.



### *Lisa's story*

I have felt a strong sense of God working in my life over the last 18 months, particularly since I acknowledged what it means to participate with Him in His plans.

I joined the Worship Team as a backing vocalist and instrumentalist, and after a time was asked if I'd be interested in

leading worship. What a shock! I had never considered leading worship, but God had other plans. I had a lot of fear surrounding my acceptance of this role, which fed in to a much larger story of how much fear I have carried in my life. Fear of failure, rejection, judgement, and the list went on.

God did some amazing work through His Spirit, peeling back layers that were inhibiting me from living the life that would honour Him most. I wouldn't say I am 'fear-free' but I now know how to tackle situations that God has invited me into, even if I don't know how it will play out.





## YOUTH & FAMILIES

The start of 2019 has been yet another testament to God's incredible love for His children as He continues to work in their young lives. For our children's ministry, we have seen God working through our leadership, as they each take the next faithful step towards following Jesus. We welcomed Marjy Robertson into the Section Leader role for Early Childhood as well as three other leaders across children's ministry. These examples of faithful service are just some of the ways in which God is working in our children's ministry and demonstrating His mission to our young people.

Within our youth ministry, both our young people and leaders have all been spurred on by those 'Sneaky Jesus' moments, where we witness what

God is doing in our lives and the lives of those around us. In March, we saw over 30 youth attend our annual GBC YOUTH Camp in Gerringong. In a night of worship and the word, when called to respond to the teachings of Jesus, almost every young person present made a commitment to take the next faithful step. Since then, we've seen our youth give their lives to Christ, step into leadership roles and even stand in front of their entire school declaring their faith.

God is here and walking alongside our young people, changing them from the inside out, and inviting them to participate in His mission. We prayerfully wait in anticipation to see what God will do in their young lives and through their young lives.

## CARE, CONNECT AND GROWING

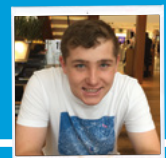
One reality is always at play in the world, and that is God's consistent work in, amongst and through His people. As followers of Jesus, we grow to notice and observe God's work more frequently, and perhaps none more often than in the interactions between other followers, as they care for one another, and grow in their relationship with God.

GBC Cares often provides opportunities to see God at work. As requests for care come in via email, phone or through GBC Links, Sheena Hind (GBC Cares Coordinator) and her team, often find themselves praying that God would provide the resources to meet the needs of those within our community. Without fail, there are always members of the team, which includes our Elders, who are stirred by God's invitation to care for others. These individuals recognise God's

equipping and His invitation, and then step into His plans, by caring, making a meal, or visiting someone in hospital.

After around six months of meeting together to better understand the role and focus of LifeGroups, our LifeGroup Steering Committee has seen and experienced the clear leading of God in beginning to plan for the future as well. As that team now begins to move towards implementation, we are excited by the plans God has made clear for the future of LifeGroups, and the team God has built to enact them.

Our Welcoming, Stewarding and Seating Host teams regularly observe the work of God as they engage in their vital roles on a Sunday, check out one example of that in Jerry's story below.



### Corey's story

I started coming on a Sunday morning because my grandparents would bring me. It wasn't really what I wanted to be doing with my weekend. A year or so later, I started to attend Friday Night Youth and could start to see the community God had been building up around me, people who

supported me and that I could rely on. It also helped that I had so much fun with everyone. It became home. Each week I came, I learnt something new about Jesus, and inch by inch, I found myself moving towards Him. Then, at the end of last year, during the message on Friday night, something clicked. I

realised I had been following Jesus for a long time, and that I was now ready to believe. God had been working in my life and I hadn't even noticed, until all of a sudden, I could see it all. I now serve as a leader for the younger youth, and am always on the lookout for what God is doing and where He is leading me.



### Jerry's story

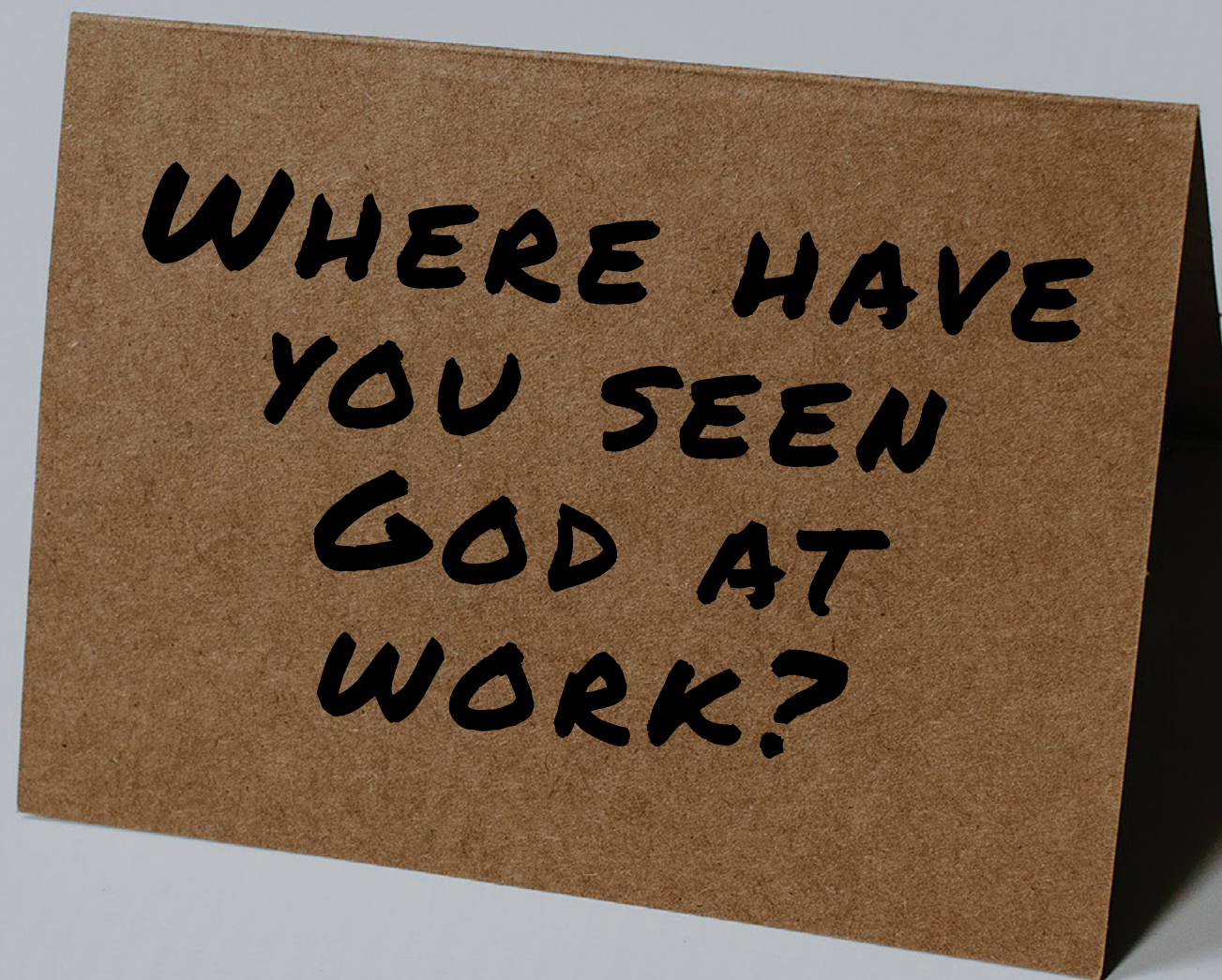
As part of the Welcome Team I have had the opportunity to chat with those who I sit near during the service. Being part of the Team is not just about shaking hands at the door, saying good morning, sharing a warm smile or a friendly

conversation over a cuppa.

Sometimes it becomes a tap on the shoulder, and a "how are you doing," and "it's great to see you today," or "let me help you get connected through GBC Links."

But with one couple, my tapping someone on the shoulder, became a close friendship, and has now resulted in their commitment to pray for me! It's great seeing God at work in the way we care for one another.





Over the last few months we have been asking this question, “Where have you seen God at work?” and have been inviting people to look for God’s activity in a few common areas. While these categories do not exhaust all the activity of God, they are a useful place to begin and, as such we thought it would be helpful to expand on them a bit in this issue.

### **Coincidences that we suspect are not coincidences**

This category of God’s action is sometimes called “God-incidences” or “sneaky Jesus moments” (that’d be our youth ministry) but is based on our belief that God is always at work. And if He is always at work then coincidences are more than they appear. There is an ambiguity to the action of God in a coincidence since it’s not always clear exactly what’s happening. However, we have a clear sense that God is in the moment and that we should keep our eyes open to what might come of the so-called coincidence.

### **Answers to prayer**

We believe that prayer is powerful and effective and that God hears and acts in response to our prayers. How exactly this works is a mystery, but it is clear that we are encouraged to pray because prayer changes things. So when we pray we should expect that God will act in response to them. This assumes that we are a) praying and; b) praying for the sorts of things that God wants to do in renewing the world.

### **Experiences of God in the Word, worship, or prayer**

These are often the most personal of the activity of God, when the Holy Spirit speaks to our heart in a particularly memorable way. When this happens to me the experience is marked by what I call a compressed revelation; it happens in an instant but takes much longer to explain. It is also common for an experience of God to be emotional in one way or another. These moments can be profoundly comforting, challenging, or refreshing.

### **Invitations to join in with what God is doing**

Sometimes we experience a prompting to do something that just pops into our heart; to pray for someone, to call someone, to ask a question, to offer to serve someone, etc. These promptings come from the Holy Spirit and form an invitation to participate with what God might be doing in that person’s life.

We often don’t know exactly why we are being prompted to say or do something but doing so often leads to really exciting moments of participating with God in his work.

### **The necessity of faith**

Most of the time the activity of God is not entirely clear; we are called to act on the belief that God is always at work and invites each of us to participate with Him and then are called to step out in faith. By faith, coincidences are transformed into sneaky Jesus moments. By faith an unexplained prompting becomes an invitation to participate. By faith our devotions become significant encounters of God. By faith we see answers to our prayers. We do, indeed, walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). So keep your eyes and ears open to the work of God and your heart soft to the invitations of God – and then talk about it!

**For more information see the My Story page on GBC Links.**





# LOCAL MISSION

***"We love Playtime. It's a very welcoming family environment."***

Through our five Playtime groups we aim to share God's love in friendship with local families who are journeying through significant times in their lives. This year has brought a new awareness of how we can be open to being God's 'hands and feet' where He is at work in people's lives, by spending time to chat and share stories.

***"The chance to meet other families in the same life stage has been incredible."***

Paul encourages us in Romans: Love must be sincere. Be joyful in hope, faithful in prayer. Share with people in need. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. God has enabled us to create a safe space at Hotham Cottage where all generations

(children, parents, and grandparents) can connect, have fun celebrating births and birthdays, find a listening ear and be cared for in the ups and downs of life.

***"We love what a relaxed and caring environment Playtime is. Our group has fast become so special and we get together at other times too."***

Our Playtime groups have had excursions to the church for Easter egg hunts and Mother's Day photos and we love families joining us at Sunday services. Adults and children alike enjoy theme-based activities; our most multicultural group learnt colours in different languages last term, and transport is 'going places' this term!

You can join in this great opportunity to be 'salt and light' in our local community too – see GBCLinks/serve.



**Mother's Heart Organization**



**the eve project**  
NOURISHING LIVES. NURTURING CHANGE



*Kath's story*

I am the Wellbeing Officer and Chaplain at Woollooware Public School and GBC has been supporting me prayerfully and financially for the past 6 years. This allows me to work two extra hours a week, which enables me to support more families, go on camps, run groups, buy resources and most of all make me more accessible to serve the kids. It may not sound like much, but those extra hours are a blessing for me to connect with the kids, plus get to know them and their needs better. So thank you for your faithful support!

# GLOBAL MISSION

This May Mission Month, we have taken the faithful step to pray and raise funds for five projects and our GBC supported missionaries. We do this because we believe God is active and transforming people around the world and we want to participate in that restorative narrative.

During our services we've heard vibrant stories from our local and overseas missionaries. Through the Bible Society's translation and literacy program in Vietnam, ethnic minorities are hearing the Bible in their own language for the first time. One learner said God felt "very far away, like from another tribe. But in our own language, God becomes one of us."

The incredible work of Mother's Heart crisis pregnancy support in Cambodia has seen over 1000 women and their babies flourish, despite unbelievably traumatic situations. One young woman said "They helped me. They support me. I feel secure and safe with them."

GBC has supported thousands of Syrian refugees through Baptist World Aid's project in Lebanon over the past 4 years. A Syrian mother whose daughter received schooling said "I am very thankful for the people who support this."

FEBC is creating focussed media programs to help break the cycle of domestic violence in Mongolia. Feedback from over 1000 listeners share how their lives have been changed through the friendly voices, music, bible messages, family education and health programs.

The EVE Project Illawarra, supports female survivors who live with trauma from past abuse as they reclaim their lives; a journey which is complex. "I have not made a decision for myself in 10 years. Safety is a feeling I haven't known. The EVE Project's supported work experience program would create a safe environment where I can be empowered to find my skills, my voice and heal from the trauma I have experienced. I could begin to flourish again."



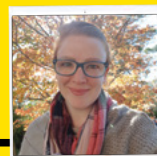
**FEBC AUSTRALIA**



**BIBLE SOCIETY**



**BAPTIST WORLD AID AUSTRALIA**  
Be Love. Get Justice.



*Laurian's story*

We arrived in Sydney as a family and what a blessing it has been to have found Friday Playtime! A welcoming morning filled with meaningful conversations and lovely people.

Story times, crafts, baby dolls being pushed in prams and quality playing outside make my children's hearts happy and content. Friday Playtime is definitely a place where the girls and I feel a part of something special which has

helped us immensely in settling down after moving here from South Africa.

We look forward to many more Friday mornings, filled with experiencing God's love first hand.





## SOUTHERN COMMUNITY WELFARE

May 2019 saw our first Community Hub event- an event which was the culmination of, and realisation of a vision our service has been working towards for a number of years. Moved and driven to see lives changed by Jesus, Southern Community Welfare (SCW) has actively been seeking those on the fringes, those marginalised, and those left behind. We have a message of hope and the means to provide practical support and the Community Hub is designed to bring services and support to those who have trouble accessing services through conventional channels. With a great meal provided by our homeless food service partner OneMeal, we were able to connect the homeless and marginalised with services like Centrelink and Housing, as well as provide some food for the coming week.

Robert B, a psychologist at SCW, has worked in various homeless services and had an encounter at the

Community Hub that was significant. "It was a great day with lots of good conversations and fun, but one conversation stood out. I was handing out some fresh fruit and veges along with a loaf of bread. One guy was more than happy for the fruit but said he didn't need the bread. My response was along the lines of you could just freeze what you don't use and his reply was awfully sobering." Sitting there with his dog and simple clothing he replied by saying he lives in his car. WOW! There is a real need. We need to bring God's love and restoration. God's hope and healing. Yes, we all have needs but some are more easily missed than others; some are more easily met than others.

God used the workers of SCW to bring dignity and hope. It reminds us that the work we do and that you support, is real, is needed and is important. We are all invited to partner with God to meet the needs that he places in front of us.

## FINANCES

One of the ways that God invites us to participate with His plans to restore and renew the world is through our financial resources. By contributing financially to the vision of GBC we are enabled to respond generously to need in our community, to provide excellent programs and opportunities for those in our community, and to say Yes! to the invitations God extends to us. And there is so much we could be doing to participate with God.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to our capacity to respond to the invitation of God! We are dependent on your generosity to do what we believe God is calling us to.

If you'd like to join in with what God is doing we'd encourage you to do so via electronic giving. This

facilitates consistency and requires some thought about what we will give (and our giving should be considered – 2 Corinthians 9:7). Our bank details are below and more information, including some reflections on what the Bible has to say about giving, can be found on GBC Links.

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







**GBC**  
gymeabaptist.org.au