



FINDING YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S MISSION

PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

GBC

ISSUE 8



A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

As a community of faith our purpose is found in the words of Jesus in John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." These words sit over our front doors as a reminder, every time we walk out those doors, that we aren't just leaving, but are being sent to participate with God the Father in His grand plan to restore everything in Jesus. And we aren't sent alone, but with the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit and with the encouragement that comes from the body of Christ. We are in this together!

The invitation to participate in God's mission is based on two critical foundations. First, that everywhere we go and in everything we do God is at work. We do not believe that God is some divine anthropologist, observing what is taking place but not actively involved in shaping events. We believe that God is actively involved in every aspect of life. How many of us can attest to the fingerprints of God on our lives long before we placed our faith in Jesus?

Second, that every one of us is invited to participate with God. Neither our age, our gender, our

background, our "spirituality", our knowledge of the Bible, or anything else stands between us and the invitation of the Spirit to participate.

Helping one another find our place in God's mission here becomes a fundamental act of following Jesus and a primary task of GBC. It involves nurturing followers of Jesus to discern the invitation of the Spirit and to boldly act on it. Hearing the still small voice prompting us to act or speak; recognising the "chance" encounter that in the eyes of faith is anything but coincidental; seeing the opportunities to serve someone without condition; and developing the faith to listen, to see, and to act.

Over the course of 2018 this focus has become increasingly clear and compelling to me personally and it is my prayer that as a community of faith we can increasingly find our place in God's mission in our local community and see lives changed by Jesus.

**God bless,
Marc**

SERVICES

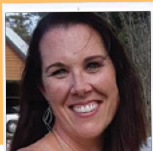
Have you ever looked around on a Sunday and taken notice of how many people are involved in making the service happen? You are greeted by welcomers as you come in the door and as you enter the auditorium you are being led and served by the service leader, the sound engineer, the lighting technician, the music team, the preacher, the bible reader, the person producing what appears on the screen, stewards taking up offerings, those preparing and sharing communion, the prayer team, those who pray on our behalf from the platform, not to mention the leaders who teach and care for the kids running a whole service of their own!

There are many roles that work together to make a Sunday service the gathering that it is, and there are many people serving in those roles to participate in what they hope will be a significant Sunday. Our teams serve to encourage the broader church. We hope that as we focus on our vision and purpose

as a church that our actions and attitudes will invite others to participate in a lifestyle of worship and mission.

Our music and tech teams in particular have gone through some changes this year and we are looking forward to growing the teams for 2019. There are many more in the church who have talents in music and those who are interested in sound, lights, vision or filming and we are keen to hear from you. If you are looking for a way to be involved in Sunday services you can head to the 'Serve' page on GBC Links to find a list of roles available. If you are interested in the tech roles – sound, lights, visuals we'd like to offer you the training necessary to do the role.

We are a big church, a church that relies heavily on hundreds of volunteer individuals. Please take up the challenge to consider the role you can play.



Tara's story

My family and I have been at GBC for the past year and feel we have found a great church home. Growing up a minister's kid I have spent my life serving in dozens of capacities in church ministry. It has always been a way to serve God with the gifts and talents He has given me as well as providing

a sense of belonging within the fellowship and mission of the church.

Having three young boys and a husband in the army I have had to change the way I serve in church. Instead of leading worship I have found roles which don't

require a lot of preparation time or rehearsals. My involvement in the prayer team and bible reading team allows me to model Sunday participation to my boys while not demanding too much from my family. We see God at work in our family as we serve and attend our services together.



YOUTH & FAMILIES

As 2018 draws to a close, our team looks back with certainty of God's hand in the lives of our young people. As we seek to focus on how God is inviting us to partner in His mission, it is clear that youth and families are an integral aspect of the mission field.

Within our children's ministry, we held the third annual school holiday program for primary aged children, Winterfest. It was a huge success, seeing over 100 children attend, with half coming from outside the GBC community. The event was facilitated by an intergenerational team, the youngest being only 10, and others in their 80's. It was incredible to see God using such a diverse group to further His kingdom.

The youth of GBC continue to be an extraordinary example of lives changed by Jesus. We have seen a number of young people make declarations of faith

through baptism, and take up new opportunities to serve the wider community of the church. We celebrated when 49 young people attended the State Youth Camp, carving out time to commit to developing their faith. The enduring desire to deepen their understanding of and relationship with God is something we can all learn from and marvel at.

Finally, it was exciting to see the relaunch of the GBC Young Adults ministry in 2018, holding two separate series throughout the year. We saw a number of young people come together to explore and unpack the complexities of a faith lived out loud. We are encouraged to witness these young people's resolve, to journey together and continue in growing from one another, and are confident that this will be something that will serve both the young adults and the wider community of GBC.



CARE, CONNECT AND GROWING

Seeking to find our place in God's mission often starts right here, on our church's doorstep, and the spaces where we seek to care, connect and grow as a community, regularly provide opportunities to get involved.

Exploring our part to play in God's work in the world, has led to a reimagining of the way we seek to care for one another as a community. Whilst GBC Cares and Southern Community Welfare are still there to provide assistance in life's more stretching times, it is as the priesthood of all believers that we are all invited to care for one another. This belief stands behind our new Congregational Care approach, which spans prayer and LifeGroups and now, greater involvement from our growing team of Elders. We are excited for the opportunities this new way of thinking will open for all of us to get involved in seeing lives,

not only cared for, but changed by Jesus.

Our LifeGroup Steering Committee, that includes five representatives from across the life of GBC, is now four months into praying and planning for all God is inviting us into in our smaller gatherings. It has been a hopeful and inspiring time of seeking the best way forward for us as a church to help grow disciples of Jesus, whilst also assisting people in finding their place in God's mission here at GBC. The fruits of this group's hard work will be launching throughout 2019, but there is always room for you to get involved in leading or hosting a group. Check out the LifeGroups page on GBC Links to get involved.

For news of the exciting developments in our GBC Connect team, check out Ed's story below.



Ed's story

We all know that people can sometimes feel lost in a large church. Some months ago our LifeGroup made a pact to mix with and meet people we did not know after the service each Sunday. Then two months ago my wife Nola and I were invited to become Seating Hosts as a trial for part

of the new Congregational Care approach. I have met so many people I did not know before by becoming a seating host, and meeting people I have seen yet never spoken to before has been a real pleasure. Many have taken the time to thank me for speaking to them, and this has truly grown

my feeling of belonging as a part of our church family.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a Seating Host at one of our services, check out the role description on GBC Links, and fill in an application form.

CAPITAL WORKS



As a community of faith we have begun exploring the possibility of redeveloping our old facilities. These facilities, built in the 60s have served us well for over fifty years and are a demonstration of the faith and vision that we hope to replicate as we make this decision. Our spiritual forebears began a Sunday School in a chicken shed (you can see it in the background of the photo below), before purchasing an ex-military hut (also pictured). Within a decade, they made a decision to build the original auditorium and education centre. I cannot begin to calculate the number of lives that have been impacted by the gospel as a result of their faith and vision!

I hope that our legacy to the next generation lives up to that which has been left for us. I hope that whatever form the redevelopment takes that it serves the community and the purpose of the gospel for another fifty years (or more!).

After our mid-year meeting when it was decided to begin to explore redevelopment we got right to work, appointing a small Capital Works Committee as a subcommittee of the Church Leadership Team, to do some of the initial work. This has included: creating a reverse brief for an architect with input from key ministry areas, receiving initial sketches, providing feedback on those sketches, an initial geotech survey,

and a stakeholders meeting to have a high-level look at a second set of drawings.

There's still a lot of work to be done, beginning with a pre-DA meeting with Council to explore whether the concepts are feasible as well as some initial costings of any plans that are given the green light to proceed.

Please join me in praying for this proposed project; for the faith and vision to see beyond physical and financial limitations; for the favour of Council; for wisdom to make good decisions; and for those who will be impacted by this project in the years to come.



PATHWAYS

Pathways is a new initiative designed to help people find their place in God's mission here at GBC. It will be officially launched in March next year and will be an important part of how people connect to our community of faith; building relationships and getting involved in the life of GBC.

Pathways is an opportunity to share who we are as a church, where we believe that God is leading us, how we are seeking to go where God is leading us, and how people can find their place in this mission. It's an exciting initiative and I am really looking forward to the impact Pathways will have in helping those who are new to GBC connect.

Earlier this month we ran a trial version of Pathways for our current congregations and I was incredibly encouraged by the almost 250 people who came along over the four options we provided. The opportunity to cast vision and invite people to participate was absolutely brilliant.

It is my prayer that Pathways will provide a clarity about who we are and where we believe God is leading us that will result in a Spirit-inspired alignment and unity, an expectation and anticipation of what God will do in our midst, and an increased willingness to get involved in the mission of God.



LOCAL MISSION

As a community, we are focusing on the social justice issues of Domestic Violence and Ethical Consumerism. Both are complex topics which we are exploring to understand how we can be the change.

In 2018, almost 210,000 women living in Australia will experience domestic violence at the hands of an intimate partner. Domestic violence is also the leading cause of homelessness in Australia. We believe that all people are created in God's image, loved and valued by their Creator, and should be treated with equal regard – without violence, or controlling abusive behaviour. We have been involved in the Sutherland Shire White Ribbon Walk since its inception and are engaging in ongoing learning and strategic actions with Southern Community Welfare to contribute locally to the restoration of our nation's identity in this area.

Over 24.9 million people are exploited by slave labour suffering inhumane conditions on farms and factories that produce many of our everyday clothes, goods and food. Slavery is more common today than it was when it was abolished and hides deep within supply chains, often making consumers seeking 'cheap goods' unwitting enablers. Our seventh annual Fair Trade Night Market supported transformative community projects in over 30 nations. Buying Fair Trade ensures the people behind the products receive a living wage, safe working conditions and hope to break the cycle of poverty. Ethical consumerism invites us to become 'conscious consumers' thinking beyond our own needs so our luxury does not mean someone else's poverty.



While we live in a global community our presence and actions are mostly in a local context. Our Catalyst team champions our response to Domestic Violence and Ethical Consumerism and you are welcome to join in the various events and opportunities we host with GBC and

the wider community throughout the year.

We're also passionate to love and serve our local community without condition and we do so through a number of spaces including Playtime, Kids Hope, Scripture

Teaching, COACH, GBC Carols, The Fathering Project and Southern Community Welfare. If God has been prompting you to connect and serve in our local community, put it to prayer and find more information on these areas at GBC Links, under the Serve tab, choose Local Mission.

We all have an opportunity to partner with God where he is at work around the world through May Mission Month in 2019. We believe that issues of poverty and injustice are multidimensional, that solutions must address the underlying causes of poverty and engage people in ways that are sustainable and have a positive long-term impact on communities.

Another way we connect with our global community is through our supported workers and missionaries, who are in local and global contexts in a range of ministries. We support them financially and through prayer and are also developing ways to continue to send others towards the mission God is calling them to.

We are planning our next mission exposure trip to Cambodia in 2020, to learn from and support where God is already at work amidst our partners. We are mindful to cultivate mutual partnerships of learning and understanding, so that all involved have the space to see their lives changed by Jesus.



GLOBAL MISSION

May Mission Month in 2018 has supported a variety of projects including the broadcast of focused radio programs across Mongolia to help deal with issues of domestic violence, alcoholism and relationship breakdown (FEBC), healing and restoration of women coming out of the sex-trafficking industry in Cambodia (Daughters of Cambodia), rebuilding outreach in South NSW surfing communities and training at-risk youth in a carpentry workshop in Mauritius (Christian Surfers). Plus, for a third year supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon as they rebuild their lives after fleeing a devastating civil war (Syrian Assist - Baptist World Aid).

We can often feel powerless or overwhelmed in how to respond to significant issues such as these, however through a collaborative effort, we raised

over \$280,000 for these worthy causes. The tearful response from Syrian refugees is that they cannot believe anyone would care and especially from so far away. From Cambodia one of the clients said she has begun "to know God. I have learnt so much from the workshops on how to live a better way. I'm really thankful, for helping a sex-worker like me to have a new life, new skills and hope for the first time in my life."

While we may never meet these people personally we are reminded continuously by Jesus and throughout the Bible, that when we care for those experiencing poverty, we partner with God. As the Mission Action Group assess applications for May Mission Month 2019, we are prayerfully looking for where God is already at work and where we can partner with Him.





SOUTHERN COMMUNITY WELFARE

There was an extravagant celebration of God's faithfulness on Saturday 29th September when the community was blessed with a free sausage sizzle, lamb on the spit, a five piece jazz band and fun for the kids. It was an amazing day that demonstrated the spirit of the occasion and marks the beginning of the next phase of SCW's services to the local community.

In line with Southern Community Welfare's (SCW) 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan, "Flourishing Communities", SCW opened a satellite location in Cronulla. It re-established the Southern Grace Op Shop, as well as offering case management services from this new location.

Most importantly however, Cronulla offers the opportunity to establish a new Community Hub – a place that will invite the community to engage, to build connections, to participate and belong.

This is a very exciting time in the evolution of SCW. What started out as an incredibly ambitious plan a little over a year ago, is now starting to become reality.

The ability to launch these services would not have been possible without the incredible support of so many faithful and wonderful supporters through the amazing community at GBC.

Your faithfulness and willingness to heed the invitation and participate in the vision has been a key enabler. Your giving of finances, volunteering of time and commitment to pray has enabled a vision to begin to become reality. This dream would never have become possible if not for this incredible group of faithful people who believed it was possible.

The opportunity to participate in what God is doing with SCW continues and we would love you to be a part of this. Opportunities exist now for volunteers at the op-shop or if you would like to serve alongside those in our community in need, then there'll be more opportunities to do this as we launch the Community Hub early next year.

On behalf of the entire SCW Board and staff we thank you sincerely for the story that you have been a part of creating and look forward to sharing more of this journey with you in months to come.



FINANCES

Throughout November we have been exploring financial stewardship in our sermon series entitled "Free?" from the perspective of discipleship. In line with our strategic priority on discipleship we have tried to open a conversation about finances as followers of Jesus; to engage with the money myths we encounter in our society; to begin to practice the spiritual disciplines that keep our hearts free from the intoxicating effects of the pursuit of wealth. It's been a challenging series and one that has emphasised the centrality of our relationship with God in financial discipleship. Relationship is central to stewardship since stewardship of another's resources is always done with an eye to the desires of the true owner of those resources. As followers of Jesus we are invited into relationship with God to become more aware of His plans and then steward His resources more effectively.

It is relationship with God that keeps our loyalty firmly focused on the true provider of security rather than on the false promises of wealth and money. It is relationship that allows us to use money as a tool rather than submit to it as a master.

It is relationship with God that keeps us from a lack of gratitude, a subversion of community, and an erosion of purpose. We are called to so much more than mere

enjoyment of life, but to participate with God in His plans and purposes.

It is through relationship with God that we are invited to participate financially; to give freely, generously, and with the plans of God firmly in mind. It is where we find gratitude, purpose, and true satisfaction.

Your decision about giving to the vision and mission of GBC is not only about dollars and cents, but about your own growth as a follower of Jesus. This is too important to keep personal and private, but must be something we practice as disciples of Jesus.

As we head into 2019 each of us is being encouraged to consider how we are being invited to participate financially in what God is doing and to boldly take up that invitation.

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

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



FREE?

The "Free?" series is available on our podcast. Supporting Life Group material can be found on GBC Links.



GBC

gymeabaptist.org.au