



# SA NEWS

**Newsletter of the Presbytery of South Australia    Issue 56    December 2022**

## **Tis The Season Of Preparations.**

This time of year all of life seems to focus on December 25 and the celebration of Christmas.

Amid the parties, break-ups, graduations, end of years (even birthdays) pretty much everyone is planning for that day of celebration.

Some will do it with anticipation and joy, others with apprehension and uncertainty. Some will be looking forward to being with those they love, others will do so conscious of loved ones no longer in this life.

For many the desire to get Christmas just right. For nothing to be forgotten, every last detail attended to, and for it to be a celebration for which every preparation was made.

But we don't plan to have a perfect Christmas for perfection's sake. We want those we love to enjoy themselves, and our plans are simply a means to that end.

As Christians we celebrate Christmas as the time when our incarnate Saviour was born. 'Veiled in flesh, the Godhead seen' we sing.

What preparations are necessary to celebrate our annual remembrance of the first coming of Jesus.

The wider Christian church suggests the best way to prepare to celebrate the first coming of Jesus is to be prepared for His second coming.

Some of you will be aware that some churches observe a time called Advent in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

During these weeks the Bible readings which are followed don't focus so much on the familiar narrative of Jesus' birth, but on the texts which speak of His return as judge, deliverer and Lord of creation.

The actions of reading and preparation are meant to help us focus on the real meaning of our celebration of Jesus' birth.

We're not sentimentally celebrating a new life and the joy of a young family.

Nor do we simply believe that through the incarnation itself, through Jesus' birth alone, that God made peace with humanity.



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A purpose that started before time, which was revealed to creation at the incarnation, was achieved through Jesus' death and resurrection, and will be fulfilled at His second coming.

So, as Christians, we are most prepared to celebrate Jesus' first coming at Christmas, by being prepared for His second coming, our being gathered to Him.

We do this by confirming that we look to Him alone as Saviour and Lord. We do this by assuring that should we meet Him today we would be living just the way we believe we'd want Him to find us living.

And our preparedness for his second coming is not just for one day. Every day we show our thankfulness for the first coming by living as those prepared for Jesus' return.

Gary Ware

## **Adelaide Presbyterian Church**

### **Seacliff Congregation**

The congregation has enjoyed David Tsai's sermons on the seven cities mentioned by John in Revelation, supported by photos of the cities taken by Heather Gossip on her recent trip to Turkey. Some would consider this is ancient history, but David's sermons made it feel like it was only yesterday.

The congregation grew a little with a local couple, three from further away and a couple from Canberra. We have been stepping out to take Jesus to the locals, particularly with our community Christmas get together coming up soon, with advertising posters and personal invitations. It is on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November.

We have also had our fair share of illness and recuperation from operations in the past three months. As we stand we have almost all our congregation back in the pews.

We have just had a baptism last week for Praveena who had been with us for a few years; there is a wedding coming for Lucy and Marchin; and who could forget our soup suppers after the service. They are delicious and fellowship is enhanced as we chat and eat.

We all look forward to the coming Christmas season.

We have also enjoyed David and Meredith Tsai, their teaching and encouragement in their stay with us. We all wish they could stay a little longer but Retirement beckons.

Ian Gossip

## Naracoorte

This past period has been a challenge as there have been several absences due to travel and illness. We have had several members with illness and operations. Much prayer has sustained them through their recovery and healing. The Lord is good.

Pat headed to South Korea at the end of August. She was eager to return to her role in teaching Conversation English to missionaries and missionary candidates.

*'I am always amazed at the dedication and commitment of the students to learning another language. They need to learn English as they work in multi-national teams; then they must learn the language of the people they live and work amongst.*

*One of the married missionaries is attending MTI on her own while her husband is continuing their work in Africa (can't mention names to keep them safe). They manage an orphanage there, about a half an hour from the local village. The children are orphans, because the terrorists come in and kill the parents. There are 35 children in the orphanage at present. The husband goes away for 2-3 nights every few weeks to collect food for the villagers and must leave his wife and daughter on their own. I asked her about protection, thinking that they would live in a compound with a high fence or wall around it, but no, it has a small fence – no protection at all. Please pray for this family as they follow Jesus' great commission to "... go and make disciples of all nations..." Matt 28:19*

Our KYB Bible study continued in Term 3 when we looked at the Life of Paul. What a great example to follow as we endeavour to serve the Lord? The term 4 study is on the themes of Leviticus which is very enlightening and encouraging for us all.

Other Church activities like PWA and Fellowship have been in remission in the winter months, but a lunch, to enjoy fellowship and good food, was held on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November for all ladies of the congregation as we brought to a close our activities for the year.

We have been blessed to have Rev Rudi Schwartz return for 3 weeks in August and again for 4 weeks from the 13<sup>th</sup> November to encourage and sustain us. In his visits in May and August he preached on 'Waiting for Christ's Return' and published a booklet following the series of 6 sermons. We thank our Lord for his dedication in coming to preach and teach us, as each time he comes he encourages us all greatly and his sermons are such a blessing as they sustain and motivate us in our walk with Jesus.

This has been a very difficult year for so many people in our nation, as was 2021, 2020, 2019 etc;... but let us continue to rejoice and be joyful in God our Saviour.

*"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food,*

*(Continued on page 4)*

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*though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour."*

Habakkuk 3:17-18

We wish all our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus a Blessed Christmas Season and a Happy New Year.

Julie McLean & Pat Leitch

## Karnkendi Campsite

Karnkendi Campsite September-November 2022.



After a quiet Winter the start of Spring did see some nice weather, with a break in camps, this gave us time to finally redirect all the plumbing and install the commercial water softener to the 5000 GL storage tank. This means we are now totally independent from the Nelson Church, which will be up for sale in the near future.

With regular meetings back on the agenda the committee met at the Penola church mid October

to catch up and discuss the campsite.

Late October saw the new user group Big Heart Adventures which are an Adelaide based tour company that tailor guided tours to small elderly groups who enjoyed sections of the Great South West Walk and canoeing on the Glenelg River.

22<sup>nd</sup> October saw the long awaited Memorial service for a lovely couple who were residents of Nelson and who passed away during restrictions. The ceremony went well and catering was supplied by the lovely team at the Nelson Kiosk with some guests staying in rooms and also the Cottage.

The end of October saw Covid infections starting to become active in our area with myself falling positive on the 28<sup>th</sup> October and so

Heather didn't contract this, I stayed at the Cottage for nearly a week so that she was able to attend our Son's wedding on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November. It was great to have somewhere to isolate to be able to make it to the big day together with family and friends.



Karnkendi tank plumbing

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8<sup>th</sup> November saw another new user group for youth from Beyond Limits, a South Australian based provider from the Uniting Church who extended their stay to 2 nights with a total of 20 students and teachers.

Once again we are blessed as the Cottage is going to have Parks Victoria staff staying for the summer season so we are busy getting this ready once more for renting.

We have been getting bookings from local indigenous groups looking to enjoy the area in early December and mid January which will also see Seymour Girls College rowing team from Adelaide with approximately 80 students and trainers using the facility for a week.

As always thank you for your prayers of support and we both wish readers a healthy and blessed Christmas / New year.

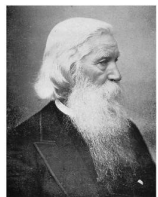
Harvey and Heather McBain  
Karnkendi Caretakers  
Nelson.



### **Hmm!**

“... the second coming says that the ultimate word in history is the triumph of God, the reign of God’s kingdom, the eternal and lasting rule of the good. Here is where our advent meditation rests. By faith we are promised that evil will be judged and done away with and all will be made whole. This is the vision we want to carry with us as we view the news and visit the hospitals, psychiatric wards and prisons of our world. Christian hope is an optimism about life that is grounded in Christ and celebrated again and again in the liturgy of the church.”

-Robert Weber



### **John Paton “...the best work of all my life”**

“But on looking back now, I already clearly perceive, and the reader of my future pages will, I think, perceive, that the Lord was thereby preparing me for doing, and providing me materials wherewith to accomplish, the best work of all my life, namely, the kindling of the heart of Australian Presbyterianism with a living affection for these Islanders of their own Southern Seas—the binding of all their children into a happy league of shareholders, first in one Mission Ship, and finally in a larger and more commodious Steam-Auxiliary—and, last of all, in being the instrument under God of sending out Missionary after Missionary to the New Hebrides, to claim another island and still another for Jesus. That work, and all that may spring from it in Time and Eternity, never could have been accomplished by me, but for first the sufferings and then the story of my Tanna enterprise!” (Paton’s biography pp 222-223)

# The Man for Snowy River

Noah and Neroli Vasiliades take gospel ministry to the High Country



The Man from Snowy River is a well known Australian poem by Banjo Paterson and was first published in 'The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses' in 1895. It speaks of Mount Kosciuszko in New South Wales, the highest mountain peak in Australia and the Snowy River originating from that region. The river, immortalised in the poem, flows southward through the Eastern Victorian highlands. The poem and subsequent film have helped secure the rugged and majestic high country and surrounding regions in the hearts of many Australians.

For years the Presbyterian Inland Mission (PIM) has looked at this remote and sparsely populated region and seriously considered how it might engage in gospel mission there. In 2008, there were serious discussions between PIM, the Presbytery of Canberra, the Presbytery of Gippsland, along with local congregations about a coordinated strategy to realise gospel work across East Gippsland and SE NSW. Considerable work was done exploring options, but sadly no plan ever progressed due to a lack of funding, and the lack of a suitable Patrol team. A return to serious discussion was held in 2015, but again, nothing eventuated.

Then, in what can only be described as God's appointed time, an anonymous donor approached the PIM with a substantial financial gift to kick start gospel ministry in the isolated parts of the East Gippsland and up into the Snowy River regions. The donor held historic links to Buldah and during his more recent visits



through the area, was repeatedly struck by the lack of any real gospel presence. There was a heavy burden for the people of East Gippsland, and a desire for this lack of gospel light to change.

With one part of the jigsaw now in place, and with agreement from the Presbyteries involved, the PIM could now advertise for a suitable team. With thanks to God, there was a strong response and real interest. Then, after prayer and a thorough interview process, Noah and Neroli Vasiliades were appointed. From the committee's perspective, they were the perfect fit.

Noah and Neroli are both members of the Drouin Presbyterian Church within the Presbytery of Gippsland. An accredited tree climber and arborist by profession, Noah had spent years working throughout Gippsland and in mountainous terrain. Together with his wife, they had also spent much of their recreation time in the high country, and both had a love for the area and the people. Neroli was also Gippsland born and bred. Along with her family, she was involved at the Morwell Presbyterian Church and had always had a desire to reach others for Christ. She had worked with OAC ministries at Belgrave Heights, Rosebud SU Beach missions, THEOS outreach at Tidal River, and Southern Cross Kids' Camps.

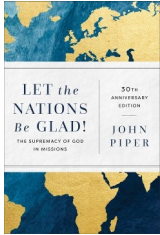
Together, they were a couple who were both ready and willing to serve, and the ministry area was one ideally suited for them to do this. Noah is described by all who know him as the natural evangelist. He can start up a conversation with anyone and can then shape the discussion to encourage people to think of issues that are eternal. He is a disciple maker who is at home in the high country.

So, the realisation of a long-held dream is about to commence. After much prayer, many years of planning, generous financial donations, a gifted team with a heart for the area, and the prayerful and practical support of Christ's church, ministry is set to begin. In the mountainous border area between Victoria and NSW, where there are few, if any, Bible teaching churches and very little Gospel witness, there will now be a Patrol Team seeking to take every opportunity to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reality was once, that long term residents in this remote area could be born, live out their lives and then die without genuinely encountering the gospel of the Lord Jesus. The prayer of the PIM is that this possibility will now be significantly less likely.

Noah and Neroli will be formally set apart by the PIM for the work on the 18<sup>th</sup> December at their home congregation at Drouin. They will be living in the former Presbyterian Manse at Bombala. If you would like to receive prayer updates from them or financially contribute to their work, please visit the PIM website at <https://pim.org.au/patrols/>

Hugh Castleden  
CEO  
Presbyterian Inland Mission

## **“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church.”**



"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church." Thirty years ago, those simple opening words in John Piper's book *Let the Nations Be Glad!* brought profound clarity to the world of overseas mission. Why? Because for many Christians, they were a reminder that the point of mission, is not simply mission but to lead people to Christ, to worship God. Here are those words in their context.

"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over and the

countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. "The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!" (Ps. 97:1). "Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy" (Ps. 67:3–4)

## **Tears of Joy**



One of APWM's missionaries serves in a part of the world where openly sharing the gospel is not welcome. We asked "What encourages you in ministry?" and she replied:

"Just the sheer number of people who are hungry to know about Jesus. Some people have been secretly believing for many years and have found us and discovered that there are other believers in

their country. They then connect with us in tears of joy knowing that they are not alone and are not the only believers.

There are a number of people who have had dreams about Jesus. From that dream they have gone online and asked the question "Who is this Jesus?" or "What is Christianity?" and found our organisation's website and said, "This is what I have been looking for!" The number of people making such online enquiries is growing at an incredible rate across the world.

Then there are whole families. We had a father connect with us and he said "Please pray for my wife, please pray for my children". He then shared the gospel with them and they came to trust in Jesus. Now there's a little community of faith in that house. It's really incredible!"



## Gospel Hope in Uncertain Times



Many will be aware that Myanmar experienced a coup in February 2021. How has this affected the church? At present no more than 5 to 10 people are allowed to gather in one place. Considerable numbers of young people have left for other South East Asian countries.

Tourism has ended. Inflation is a major issue. Safety is an issue for those living in the cities and people in many villages are unable to leave their village to purchase food. Chin State is once more facing famine caused by rats eating the crops as they did in 2007-2010.

Please pray for an end to the conflict in Myanmar. Please ask for protection for the churches in Myanmar so that they can carry on the ministry of offering the gospel and discipling believers. Please particularly ask for safety for pastors in places where the conflict is intense.

## Timor Leste Visible Witness



Viqueque Presbyterian Church building

Viqueque. You won't read it on the list of "must-see" tourist destinations should you ever have the privilege of visiting Timor Leste.

It's a remote location but it's here that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste has constructed a church building with the help of money supplied by the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

The congregation is not large but seeks to be a faithful gospel witness in this overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country. In such a situation, a building is important because it provides the Protestant church with a visible witness and a legitimate presence in a nation where the Protestant church is often viewed as a cult.

The church thanks, you the members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, for your partnership and fellowship in this project.

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## PresAID: Presbyterians Assisting in Development 2022 Christmas Appeal

PresAID's Christmas Appeal is an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many brothers and sisters in our overseas partner churches.

This year we can provide **renovations and extension** of Mtendere CCAP Christian Community School, Zambia — classrooms, fittings, playground for 407 children otherwise without any education;



**Technology and resources** for online Bible teaching and learning in South East Asia where it is unsafe to send a Christian worker;



Cyclone Harold caused significant damage to the buildings at Vanuatu's Talua Theological Training Institute in 2020. Funds will be used to provide a **new roof and solar power** which is essential as Talua is in a remote location.



Congregations are encouraged to give generously to this appeal by donating your Christmas Day offering and encouraging generous giving..

To date PresAID has been able to provide in excess of \$1.7mil for practical overseas aid projects as well as projects with a theological focus. Thank you for enabling PresAID to bless others.

## Mount Gambier

Our Growth Groups continued meeting in Term 4 and have been studying 1 Peter. The sermons every Sunday have been on a section of this book and then during the week the Growth Groups study that section in books prepared by Gary Ware.

In September 161 filled shoeboxes were sent on the start of their journey to children in other countries. Considering the circumstances again this year, this was a fantastic effort. The photo on the right is of some of the Christmas Boxes stacked up in the church.



The Care and Concern Committee held a special morning tea for one of our young people, Christina Jones, who had become engaged earlier in the year to another one of our young people, Joshua Murcott. They presented Christina with a basket of goodies for her kitchen. There were 17 ladies present at the morning tea.

On 15<sup>th</sup> October a bridal shower was held for Christina prior to her marriage to Joshua, both loved members of the congregation at Mount Gambier Presbyterian Church.

The afternoon began with a “dress the bride”. This caused much hilarity as the various styles were created from a box of assorted fabrics. Guess the amount of chocolates in a jar and an anagram competition was also held.

In the foyer at the entrance to the hall was an avenue of umbrellas for the “Shower”. Table decorations, vases of flowers, a wishing tree and a wishing well on the gift table added to the bridal theme.

A delicious afternoon tea was served to conclude a most enjoyable afternoon for Christina.

Christina and Joshua were married on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November. This was a magnificent day of celebration for the whole church as well as family and friends of Christina and Joshua.



## PRAYER POINTS

- Praise God that the Word became flesh; pray that this message will come home to many during the preaching of the word in December.
- Pray for the 2022 PresAID Christmas Appeal that people will give generously for the various causes this year.
- Intercede for the Federal Government; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Leader of the Opposition Peter Dutton; that they will be guided by Christian principles and come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
- Pray for the towns and cities of South Australia, for the people in them who do not know Christ, including unsaved family members, friends and work colleagues.
- Pray for the Adelaide Church; Davo Gunning, Ben Harvey, Peter Lim; congregations and elders.
- Pray for a Godly vision for your parish for 2023.
- Intercede for the Defence Force, Police, Ambulance, Fire and State Emergency Services.
- Pray for all those who have been affected by the floods throughout our country.
- Pray for the APWM office, Kevin Murray (Director)
- Uphold M serving in West Asia.
- Pray for the Naracoorte Church; elders and congregation.
- Pray for people living in remote and rural parts of South Australia with little access to the Gospel. Pray for PIM and the churches in SA to find effective ways to make disciples amongst these people.
- Pray for the Presbytery of South Australia, Rev Davo Gunning Moderator, Rev Gary Ware Clerk.
- Pray for people not to be fooled by the false advertising of the spirit of Christmas and that they will come to know the Saviour who was born to die for them.
- Pray for safety and wisdom for all going on holidays.
- Praise God that even while we rest He is at work throughout the world as He sends out His people, so that the whole earth might hear about Christ.
- Pray that God might use ordinary people such as yourself to reach family, friends and neighbours for Christ.
- Pray for teachers and students as they finish the school year that they will finish well and enjoy a well deserved break in the holidays.
- Pray for the people of Ukraine that through their suffering they will look to Jesus.

### Editor's Note

Thank you to all who have contributed items for this issue of SA News, they are all very much appreciated. Contributions for the March 2023 issue are to be in my hands **no later than 5.00pm Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

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I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a joyous and blessed Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

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