

St. James Lutheran Church Whyalla

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



Follow the Saviour

Again, it has been a privilege to serve as your Chairman this past year. Each year brings its fresh set of challenges to be dealt with and overcome, but it is with a deep sense of thanksgiving and praise that we recognize God's presence in providing all that is necessary.

In my role as Chairman, I frequently come across many instances of self sacrifice, voluntary activities and donations that you do to support the works of St. James' Congregation. Too many people to mention individually and I know you wish to remain anonymous, but for everything you do, I thank you sincerely.

Particularly I would like to thank Pastor Tim for his inspiring and challenging sermons.

It is important that we remain focused on God's mission for us and Pastor Tim has certainly accomplished that.

I would also like to acknowledge the Church Council members who provide wise counsel and support and contribute in such a positive way to the smooth operation of congregational matters.

I look forward with confidence and faith to what can be achieved in 2015.

God bless you all.

Keith Sichler,
Chairman.

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Chairman's Message

Keith Sichler

The bible verses on the right are some of the most well known of all and I know we all have this in our heart. At times though our logical head can be in a different place and put our focus on different priorities.

I know our church budget is at the forefront of many people's minds right now, as we seek to meet our ever increasing expenses. Each year we seem to struggle through financially, just managing to make ends meet.

Each year at our AGM, the Church Council asks you to dig a little deeper and make a larger contribution through your weekly offering.

Each year we revisit our fundraising strategies and come up with new ways to bridge the widening gap between income and expenses.

It is a familiar and well trodden path, but is our head not listening to our heart and leading us in the wrong direction?

With an ageing and diminishing workforce, the numbers are against us and if we continue to tread our current path, I believe we will eventually fail.

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22: 37-40

If we have learned anything from Pastor's sermon series on God's messages to the Seven Churches in the Book of Revelation, it is that loving and serving God, and loving and serving our fellow man is our sole purpose and mission. No compromise. Clearly, we must actively follow and implement these two most crucial instructions which Jesus first spoke of in Mark 12:33 and Matthew 22:37-40. We must put our faith into practice.

In many ways, we do strive to achieve this, but there are also many opportunities this past year and in previous years through baptisms in particular, that we have let pass for one reason or another. We have not followed up on many of the interactions we have had with people to initiate, strengthen, or renew their relationship with us and through the work of the Holy Spirit, initiate, strengthen, or renew that special relationship with Jesus.

We need to pray that the Holy Spirit guides us to see clearly how we can fulfil the mission we have been given.

We need to pray that the Holy Spirit helps us focus less on our budget blues and instead helps us concentrate more strongly on our relationship joys. We need to pray the Holy Spirit guides and assists our actions and helps us re-direct our efforts.

Yes, pray and act.

When we concentrate our efforts on finding budget solutions we are simply acknowledging the symptom and not the root cause. We are diverting ourselves from our true mission. That is why I am suggesting that if we put that same effort into developing processes to attract and retain people whom the Spirit constantly brings to our door, then we will be blessed and those 'other secondary symptoms' will disappear.

Our focus and effort needs to be redirected into 'numbers for Christ' not the numbers in our bank account.

Can we do it?

Are we willing to listen to our heart rather than our head?

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

Exodus 14:21-22, NIV

I can't imagine the intensity of emotion that the people of Israel experienced as God freed them from slavery in Egypt. Through a period of intense struggle and hardship; God battled Pharaoh to liberate the people he had chosen. With each proclamation of God's power and authority, Pharaoh's heart was hardened and for the Israelites each step closer to freedom seemed to make their burden of slavery heavier; until finally God did overcome and Pharaoh allowed God's people to leave.

What a moment of intense Joy this must have been for the Israelites as they marched out of Egypt towards a land, a home, which God had promised them. And yet in an instant this Joy turns to terror as their path seemingly ends with an insurmountable obstacle in front and a quickly advancing army to the rear. To go forward was a death sentence; no one could survive swimming across such a large sea, but to turn back meant slavery once again.

Few could know the fear that the Israelites must have felt at that moment. But we all know what fear feels like in the face of an obstacle and yet God made a way for the Israelites through the heart of the obstacle not only to bring

them safely to the other side, but that they also might see and experience the goodness, love and power of their God.

As a church community we very often live and exist between obstacles; Surrounded by barriers which seem insurmountable. As our attention turns to the obstacles, fear begins to creep in.

When that happens fear starts to become the force that directs our decisions.

Fear stops us from being real with others because we are scared they might reject us.

Fear stops us desiring renewal in our own lives and the life of our community because we are scared it might hurt or cost too much.

Fear keeps us from stepping out into the unknown because we are not certain if God will be there to catch us if we fall.

Fear holds us back from dreaming of a blessed future.

And so we stop seeking to change, we stop desiring to grow deeper in conformity with Christ; we stop wrestling with sin; we stop seeking freedom and deliverance in our lives; we stop looking for our joy in the things of God and his kingdom;

Pastor's Message

Tim Spilsbury

and instead we carve out a comfortable place, between death and slavery as we wait for one or both to overtake us.

Friends, Christ did not win us freedom so that we might live in fear. Paul writes 'So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father.'" (Romans 8:15 NLT). We can and are called to take hold of this reality!

This year we pray that the Holy Spirit might deepen his work in our hearts that we might grow into our inheritance.

When that happens fear will start to give way to trust and we will begin to see with ever greater clarity the Love the Father has for each of us.

My hope this year, is that our hearts might become thirsty for God and we seek a greater presence and influence of Him in this place.

God has a future and a plan for us. Let's be bold and step into that promise. I won't say that it will be easy or that it won't come without a cost. But what I can say is that God will bring us through every obstacle that we face on the journey. **We will not be overcome!**

Women's Fellowship

Carolyn Ronan

We have regular attendances of 13-14 women each month with various activities. Some of these included child photo guessing, a cooking demonstration by Anisha Ninan and having a tour of the truck accommodation used for the Inland Mission, John Flynn Patrol SA, which travels some 20,000 sq kms each year.

During the winter months the meetings are held in women's homes sharing in warmth and Christian love and cheer. The Christmas meal/meeting in November was held in the church hall with 19 women enjoying a most delightful meal, surprise gifts and sharing in friendships with God's love.

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES.

These included a Mothers Day trading table and soup and morning teas, Very yummy.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Purchase of the church photocopier \$1375 and church plant maintenance.
- Organising T shirts with Whyalla church and name in burnt orange colour to be used for catering and community events, thanks to Maralyn Barrett and Angela Kroschel.

- In October we started sponsoring a Cambodian student for 3 years. Raven Nem, is aged 15 years and we are funding her schooling at Plas Prai Centre, in Preah Vihear. Carolyn Ronan is the correspondent for the fellowship group. Also a donation of \$600 towards building project for the Ministry Leadership Centre.

- Assisting with organising the garage sales in the church hall.

- Completing 30 birthing Kits for PNG for regional areas

- Providing \$88 for women's devotional books for Presbyterian Inland Mission-John Flynn Patrol SA, delivered by Gae and David McDonald to the outback stations.

- Donated \$350 to Lifeline from Mite boxes

SHARED COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:-

These included the World Day of Prayer at the Salvation Army; Combined Women's Fellowship birthday St Teresa's; Combined Advent Service; Presbyterian Women's Association; Lutheran Women's SA Convention Kadina, Upper North Zone Women's Annual Fellowship Day at Jamestown and Women's Retreat at Melrose.

Each year the Women's fellowship participates in the Whyalla Anglican Church FESTIVAL of CHRISTMAS in the Westland Mall for a Christmas tree decoration display. This year was no exception with Angels of Mercy being handmade. (See picture below).



Having spent over 8-9 hours of hard labour!!! Lots of laughing and getting more glue on fingers than on angels, the final masterpiece emerged triumphant. Thanks to the many helpers including a few men and we can't wait for the 2015's creation now we have perfected the old fashion 'dolly peg'.

Keep free the 16th June 2015 as St James Women's Fellowship is hosting the Upper North Zone annual fellowship Day with theme God's Loving Care with guest speakers from 'Whyalla Pink Spirits' and "Hair to Help".

Spiritual Ministry Team

Michael Simpfordorfer

Gday All. The Spiritual Ministry Team has been meeting on a monthly basis, plus regular non formal contact as needs arise.

We have generally been happy with the congregation's involvement in letting us know of any issues that they are aware of, that require SMT input. However, there have been some instances where people have suffered in silence and not contacted Pastor or any SMT members for support and encouragement. We are here for Spiritual support but we can't help if we aren't aware of Your needs! All the members of the congregation are actually members of the SMT, as we all have a role to play in the spiritual health of the congregation, our Pastor and his family and the entire community.

We have been blessed by having Pastor Tim and Lauren leading us this year. We give thanks to God for Pastor Tim's



Christ centred approach to real life ministry, but we need to remember he is the coach not the player. It is up to us to take God's word into our hearts and spread it to all the people of the world (Well let's start in Whyalla then the whole world?)

We need to be aware on the conflicting needs on Pastor Tim's time, talents and input with the baby Spilsbury on the way and the requirements of Pt Augusta and Wilmington.

So give this some consideration on who to contact first for SMT matters.

You don't have to wait for a SMT meeting if you need to contact us. The SMT meetings are monthly and we endeavour to have the dates listed in the bulletin before the meetings, so if there are any special requirements, please contact anyone from the SMT.

Shed Men **OUTREACH**

The Shed Men have met regularly once a month for most of the year, sharing the joys and hospitality of each others sheds and back patio's (which are next to their sheds).

This fellowship of kindred spirits have a great diversity of interests, but also share much. We share a common fellowship with each other

through the sharing of food and wine as was the practice in biblical times and is continued to this day.

This year brought great sadness as we mourned the loss of one of our founding members in Rohan Wittwer.

We will miss his dry wit and his generous nature, but we also know that there is a shed in heaven with his name on it and that brings us all hope and joy.

Support Group

Peg Brereton

It is with great thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father that our small group was able to meet regularly again throughout 2014.

We are a happy bunch who enjoy Christian fellowship with each other and give support where we can.

We organised our program of activities a bit differently by alternately having one 'at home' and one 'away' meeting. It depended on circumstances as to whether we could do it strictly to the programme but were able to do almost all things as planned.

Ian McArthur gave us a PowerPoint presentation of his trip to Cape York Peninsula. Bronwyn Ellis showed a slide show of her trip to South Korea and Pastor Tim told us his life story. They were all very interesting.

We went to Ada Ryan Gardens, the Arid Lands at Pt. Augusta for a visit and lunch and Wild Dog Hill. We also visited Village Life for afternoon tea with three of our members who are unable to attend our meetings.

We also went to Lucky Bay to watch the ferry berth, unload and re-load, and then went into Cowell. On the way out, we called in to see Helen Oliver and say 'Hello'.



Support Group members enjoying a recent outing to Wadlata in Pt. Augusta..

Eileen Hamlyn's granddaughter teaches at the Cowell Area school and had invited us all to visit her classroom to show us the modern method of teaching her reception class electronically and using a whiteboard. Afterwards we were entertained on the oval with the children doing several action songs and dressing up to suit each song. We were then served an afternoon tea of biscuits and an iced chocolate cake made by some of the students and adult helpers. The cake was for Nana Hamlyn's birthday which was on the previous Thursday.

Other activities included DVD's on Egypt and the Coral Sea, we brought a book, talked about it and then swapped, Hymn singing, Personal Histories and Games Day.

We celebrated Anne Schuppan's 80th birthday and sadly farewelled two former members, Stella Schuppan and Margaret Westlake.

We are still collecting bottles and cans so that we can make donations to a charity or two. We would gratefully accept any donations of such that can be brought to Church.

Members support the Bible Society annually with \$100. A donation of \$100 was also sent to the Royal Flying Doctors and \$20 to Village Life.

We still go to Roopena on the last Friday of each month. It is not exclusively for Support Group. All congregational members, families and friends are welcome to come and join in for fun and fellowship.

We welcome any new members. Age is no barrier.

Domestic Engineers

Lauren Spilsbury

In the past year, Domestic Engineers has continued to have a wonderful time meeting together on Friday mornings. We meet in each other's homes and move around each week. There is always plenty of yummy food, topical conversation and laughing...and a fair bit of teasing of Pastor Tim :)

We have welcomed some little people along (both children and grandchildren) and they always bring a lot of joy - we have an age bracket of 4 months to early 80's...so it's for every lady in our community!

If you are at a loose end on Friday mornings from 10 am you are more than

welcome to join us- The roster is (usually) in the bulletin.



Pride in the PARK

Civic Park was again the venue for Advancing Whyalla's PRIDE IN THE PARK event this year. It is an opportunity for clubs and groups to showcase their activities to the people of Whyalla and generate pride and interest in what they do.

This time we again offered the children an opportunity to play in slime and gloop as well as make some art work to take home along with a show bag of Christian based material.

We also offered the parents a place to sit in the shade and rest.

Each of the children received a show bag of Christian based material provided by Lutheran Media. Included was a helium filled blue balloon with a printed Christian message. It was a pleasure to see these popping up around the Park. Over 100 were distributed on

the day.

Thankyou to everyone who helped in setting up, manning the stall and packing up. Huge thanks to Chris Jaensch for her detailed instructions and pre-mixing the play materials before she disappeared overseas prior to the big day.



Church Camp

Ali Zimmermann

Church Camp was held over the weekend of the 22nd and 23rd of March.

As per every year, the camp was very relaxing and a lot of fun was had. Head of the kitchen Jude Wittwer had everything (and everyone) under control with delicious meals and precision timing.

With camp members ages ranging from 4 to 80 ish...there was plenty of fun for everyone. The kids enjoyed a treasure hunt organised by Paul Jimmy (it kept them busy for a whole half an hour)!!

Saturday was a cruisy day spent doing free choice relaxing activities. Playing table tennis, walking on the beach, eating yummy snacks, playing on the iPad, exploring the great outdoors, playing games such as Rummikub, Uno, Take 2, eating yummy snacks....and apparently some people were seen eating fruit!

Cathy and Jude Murf initiated their annual ritual and got the jigsaw happening on a table. Other camp goers of all ages, put in a few pieces here and there...and the finished product looked awesome.



Church on Sunday morning was led by Pastor Tim and the band consisting of Peg on keyboard and Cathy on flute sounded beautiful.

All up, the weekend was a relaxing success enjoyed with some of the fantastic members of St James.

If you haven't been to camp in a while (or ever before)...well, 2015 could well be the year to make an appearance.

Mark the date in your diary. 6th-9th March...long weekend.

I'm sure you'll have a ripper weekend.



Kids Church

Chris Jaensch

2014 has certainly passed in the blink of an eye.

So what has happened during that time?

We have been blessed with the attendance of a small but regular group of children who have grown closer to each other. This has strengthened their relationships and friendships. We have also been blessed with some new children attending during 2014. Sadly one of our families has moved away from Whyalla. This has left us with a big hole as not only did we lose a child, we also lost a leader.

Faith Inkubators, Bible Song material has been used again during 2014. We completed the Good News series which covered the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. In the latter part of the year we started the Songs of Israel series however due to a computer problem we have since ceased that series and have started 2015 with the Books of Moses.

Using the Bible Song material enables children to learn bible stories through art, music and movement. Children freely share their lows and highs in a respectful atmosphere and then pray for each other. The bible is also used regularly and each child is given their own bible that they can then use and mark as they like. We also bless each other at the end of our session. Being physically blessed by the children and helpers at the end of our session is such a powerful recharge!

During the year a congregational survey was distributed over a couple of weeks suggesting some alternative names for our children's ministry. This came about because some members felt that "Faith Kernel Events" did not explain what we did to the outside community and as we are advertising regularly in the Whyalla News Community section we needed something that told people what we were about. The results of the survey were taken to Church Council and with their approval "Faith Kernel Events" became "Kids Church".

Thanks must go to Michael Simpfendorfer who regularly submits details to the Whyalla News so that the community of Whyalla are kept informed about what we offer.

A big thank you must also go to the leaders and helpers who give freely of their time and energy to enable us to provide this service to our children. Without them we would not have a children's ministry.

Thanks are needed to be given to the parents who regularly bring their children to worship. Having a group of children singing, working and praying together is very satisfying for all of us. Without them we would not have a children's ministry.

Unfortunately over the years, due to the need to accommodate worship and the modifying of the Faith Inkubators material we have lost our way with the true mission of Bible Song.

The Bible Song Mission

"To connect parents and children with each other and the Bible every night in every home and every week in every church."

In 2015 we have the opportunity to rediscover the mission, theory and research behind the Bible Song material.

I challenge each and every member, young or old, parent or non-parent to seriously consider attending the Rethinking Child, Youth and Family Ministry in Modern Australia training weekend, Saturday 25 to Sunday 26 April 2015, being held at Cummins.

If we are serious when we say that we would like our children to come to know Jesus as their saviour and to learn to turn to him when troubles arise...if we are serious when we say that children are the future of our congregation then please come to Cummins with me and be invigorated.



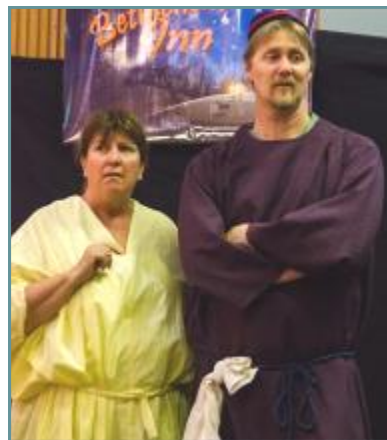
A Night at the Bethlehem Inn

Keith Sichler

We all know what happened at the back of the Inn that first Christmas, but what did the people in the Inn know? Were they aware? Did they even suspect?

This was the theme for this years Christmas play which featured a brave but slightly grumpy innkeeper, his very understanding wife and their two beautiful daughters. There was Mary & Joseph of course plus an assortment of patrons there for the evening and a live band in the corner.

Then there were the traditional Christmas visitors with shepherds and wise men calling in together with a couple of Herod's soldiers looking for the child.



A wonderful evening based on the message that Jesus is always nearby; sometimes you just don't know it!

CAST

Innkeeper	Grant Jeffery
Innkeeper's wife	Chris Jaensch
Daughters	Jade Bishop & Kahli Jeffery.
Joseph	Carolyn Ronan
Mary	Judith Murphy
Patrons	Andrew Schwenke, Jasmin Simpfordorfer, Tim Spilsbury & Con Theologou.
Wise Men:	Angela Kroshel, Diane Zimmermann & Marilyn Sichler
Shepherds:	Brock & Cooper Zimmermann, Owen & Alex Taylor and Judith Murphy.
Herod's Soldiers:	Joel & Jayden Ninan.
Isaiah's Prophecy	(Band) Annette Waters, Ali Zimmermann, Lauren Spilsbury, Rolf Wittwer, Steven Murphy, Peg Brereton & Keith Sichler.

Bible Society Hymnfest

Bible SocietySA held a Hymnfest at St. James on Sunday 26th October with members of most Whyalla Christian denominations attending. They were entertained by local artists The Whyalla Singers, pipe organist John Higgins and tenor Graham Caddy who were ably supported by Peg Brereton, Yvonne Carpenter, Wayne Wong and Eliza Higgins.

An enthusiastic crowd of 80 joined in the singing which resonated beautifully in the church building.

Bible Society representative Ian Morley gave some background to the work of the Bible Society in Iraq where members are providing direct aid to those Christians suffering atrocities at the hands of ISIS. A collection to support this work raised \$1,270. Ian also added that no administration costs would be deducted and that 100 percent of the funds raised would go in direct support measures such as shelter, clothing and water.

The event was MC'd by Phil Stone in his inimitable style, adding his light-hearted touch to the introductions and providing background to each of the hymns. Special thanks to concert organiser Jim Havelberg who ensured that the event was well organised and promoted.



Pastor Tim with Bible Society reps Steve Bengtsson and Ian Morley.

Bible Study

The Prodigal God by Timothy Keller

Of course we all know the story of the Prodigal son, but the Prodigal God?

Yes there is so much more to this parable than the story of a son who wastes his inheritance and returns home expecting to have to work as a servant but is instead welcomed and lavished upon by his father.

Look up the word 'prodigal' in the dictionary (or google it) and you will find it is described as 'recklessly extravagant', 'willing to risk everything', lavishly abundant. Yes, this is the Father's love for us.

A book that very clearly explains Jesus message to the Pharisees in this parable.

