

REVIEW of SESSION for 2008

Goodbye and good riddance 2008 said many after the New Year's celebrations, for millions of people around the world saw 2008 as a year of great disasters. As wars continued to rage around the world with thousands of people dying and suffering, almost all of the countries around the world were affected by the infamous 'World Credit Crunch' or 'Financial Meltdown', the worst since the 1930's – especially the U.S.A., and certainly all of the European countries.

Well, what happened? Is the world coming to an end? Thousands of so called 'experts' around the world are busy trying to work out a satisfactory solution to our man made problems. Yet the answer is simple, in fact it is so simple that even the blind can see it. Simply; man has taken his eyes off God and set them on other gods. The good answers to all of our problems are already written in the Holy Book, the Bible. Ignore it at your own peril, and that is exactly what is happening in the world today. But do not be surprised, these things must take place before the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. No matter what happens, stay calm and trust in God.

Likewise, it is an ongoing battle for your Session Leaders to stay focused and to remain relevant. Unseen forces are always at work to try and affect the work of God's church in Penrith, but your Elders have been working just as hard – with God's help – to ensure that it does not happen. How do we do it? By keeping our eyes and minds focused on God, and by doing God's will. This is not meant to be self praise, it is confirmation of the power of the spirit of Christ working in His Church.

So, what has been happening throughout 2008?

Study, study, study. It almost seems like back to school all over again, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. We have now finished our main studies and have taken steps to ensure that all our efforts will bear fruit in the coming years. You may have already noticed that things have changed slightly in our church activities, and there is more to come.

For your information here is our 'Vision Statement' again:

'Our vision is to be a joyful community of God's people from many backgrounds growing to over 400 followers of Jesus by 2018, meeting for worship in large groups, and for discipling and encouragement in small groups as we live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission in Penrith and beyond.'

IN BRIEF:

Appointments

| | | |
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| Commissioned Elder to the N.S.W. General Assembly | - | Imre Nagy |
| Commissioned Elder to the Presbytery of Hawkesbury Morrison | - | Craig |
| Alternate Commissioned Elder to the Presbytery of Hawkesbury | - | Robert Green |
| General Mission Promoter Sylvester | - | Kevin |
| Young Families Co-ordinator (new appointment) | - | Neil Sperinck |

Key Ministry Area: Young Families

Job Title: Young Families Co-ordinator (A voluntary position).

Tenure: One year initially (Reviewed by Session)

Reports to: Session through Assistant Minister.

Aim: To support our church ministry to new and existing young families attending our church.

Implementation of weekly Vision prayer points

As of 16 March.

1. Prayer points related to the Vision to be included in the weekly news sheets.
2. Prayer points related to the Vision to be included in public prayers within the service.

Vision Launch

Since a lot of our efforts have gone into study and preparation of 'Vision', it was finally launched during the Sunday morning service on the 16th. of March.

Session Retreat

A workshop Seminar presented by Bill Lutton to help overcome stasis, and Structure for Ministry in the Local Church, was held at the home of Rev. William Morrow on the 8th. of March. The study outlined the need for change in the local church, and the way Session runs its business.

This Seminar flowed-on as a direct result of the Fanning the Flame study your Session has been involved in for the last couple of years or so.

The concept of the Seminar was accepted by Session as a workable model for our church to use.

Church Directory

A new style of Photo Church Directory was approved by Session for distribution to the congregation as a useful tool to improve fellowship amongst fellow congregation members.

Second Sunday Morning Church Service

As part of our vision, a second church service following the traditional church service was strongly considered to cater for young families.

This is being considered by the Worship Ministry Team. A final decision is yet to be made.

Full-time Assistant Minister

A special congregational meeting was held on the 5th May to appoint a full-time Assistant Minister from the 1st January 2009.

Documents approved by Session, and the Terms of Appointment for a full-time Assistant Minister were read and explained.

Congregation has affirmed its previous decision to employ a full-time Assistant Minister together with the Terms of Appointment, and that Minister is to be Mr. Stephen Gould.

In addition, the relevant documents for the appointment of Stephen Gould were approved to be submitted to the Clerk of the Presbytery and the Superintendent, Ministry and Mission Committee, for approval.

Proposed amendment to Official Church Name

A request was put forward by a member of Session that the Official Church Name which was approved on the 4th of July 1950 namely 'St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Penrith' be changed to 'Penrith Presbyterian Church.'

After some discussions it was decided that the congregation should be consulted at the 2009 Annual Congregational Meeting, as to whether they approve of the renaming of the Official Church Name.

Multicultural Ministry Development

A lot of people who arrived in Australia to live here permanently have difficulties in speaking and understanding English. Many miss going to church as they used to in their native country, or there may be some who would like to join an English language church but are reluctant to do so because of their language difficulties.

English as a second language (E.S.L.) is a ministry designed to breakdown the language barrier, and to reach out to those who are starved of the good news of the gospel.

Michael Wilson and Judy Rowlands held a talk on the E,S,L. ministry in our church hall, and it was generally agreed that there are great possibilities to draw on the local population for further development of the E.S.L. Ministries.

To fully appreciate the outcome, more input is required from members of the congregation, and if you would like to be involved please contact Elder Kevin Sylvester for more details.

Presbyterian Inland Mission

If you have ever complained about the price of petrol you are not alone. Spare a thought for the unfortunate people living in the bush. Price of gas, petrol and diesel has always been dearer in the bush. When inland missionaries struggle to pay for diesel, then, 'things are crook in Tobruk.' as we used to say in the army. The vehicle is the missionaries' lifeline to reach isolated people in the country.

Money boxes (dollars for diesel) were distributed throughout the church for donations. The response is pleasing, and a substantial amount of money is being donated by generous members of our church, and we wholeheartedly thank all those who have contributed.

Prayer Times

Usually Elders assemble in the Vestry for prayer before the commencement of Church Services. To avoid rushing through the prayers it was decided to assemble in the vestry at 8:45 a.m. and 6:45 p.m. respectively, and continue for 10 minutes. One or two Elders are to be involved in welcoming worshippers to Services, and members of the congregation are to be welcomed into the Vestry for prayer time.

This idea has worked well up to now, but all Elders have to maintain a strong sense of self discipline to avoid a last minute rush for prayers.

Church Organizations Strategy Planning

First Strategy Planning adopted to achieve our Church's Vision are as follows:-

Day P.W.A. - Demonstrating love

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| Evening P.W.A. another | - | Demonstrating Jesus' love for one another |
| Kids Holiday Club | - | Reaching Out |
| Youth Group (P.T.G. Press towards Goal) praise. | - | Worshipping our God with joyful |
| Bible Study Groups | - | Obedience |
| Mission Awareness Group | - | Obedience |
| Kids Church | - | Reaching Out |

Prayer Boxes

For the benefit of the congregation prayer boxes have been placed at each end of the Church pews together with prayer slips and pencils. The slips can be used by anyone in church to request a prayer publicly via the worship leader, or privately by contacting one of the Church Elders.

Child Protection

A Christian church is generally regarded as a place of safety and of high moral standards, but nothing can be taken for granted these days, and to protect the defenceless and the protector, rules must be observed.

Our aim as a Session is both protection and to provide a place of safety for all.

To keep child protection at the forefront of our minds a 'Child Protection Refresher Course' was held on the 21st. of September. Those who attended were well satisfied with the outcome and the way the course was conducted.

Session Ministry Teams Finalised

The following are the seven Session Ministry Teams that have been established. Each Ministry Team is headed by an Elder followed by Team Members.

If you have a matter of concern or something to discuss, then please refer to the relevant Team Leader or Team Member.

Worship: **William Morrow**, Geoffrey Westcott, Ingrid Gould, Ann Toland, Elaine Morrison.

Obedience/Christian Education: **Craig Morrison**, Jean Ferrington, Leonie Morrow, Heather Shaw.

Reach Out/Mission: **Kevin Sylvester**, Steve Gould, Denise Sylvester, Margaret Clements, Simon Enese, Angela Enese, Tracey Mercer, Hannah Mercer, Andrew Mercer, Earl Mason, Margaret Mason.

Demonstrate Love/Fellowship: **Lindsay Ferrington**, Dorothy Shinn, Thelma Bragg, Hedley Thompson.

Prayer: **Bruce Logan**, Georgette Delicata, Michelle Parker, Emily Ward.

Pastoral Care: **John Pickering**, Shirley Thompson, Jo Ifopo, Lyndall Pickering, Neil Sperinck.

Administration/Session: **Imre Nagy**, Robert Green.

Thanksgiving:

For sometime now there has been concern about the acceptance as a credible profession of faith for the baptising of infants, the statements of non-church parents. As an alternative for those who are not prepared to make the commitment to the church that baptism involves is an offer of a Thanksgiving Service.

Licensing Service for Mr. Stephen Gould:

A Licensing Service was held at the Hawkesbury Presbytery Meeting at Wentworthville on Wednesday the 3rd. of December 2008. Several members of the congregation have attended the Service. Mr. Stephen Gould was licensed as a Preacher of the Gospel.

We congratulate Steve for his life-long commitment to serve the Lord, and thank God for His goodness.

Home Communions:

Two home communion services were held in both June and December for our older members who were unable to attend church.

New Membership:

By profession of Faith: Simon Enese, Angela Enese, Karen Hart, Alice Kafka, Isabella Lavalette, Earl Mason, Margaret Mason, Violet Wilson, James Whitu, Ofelia Whitu.

Session Meetings:

There were 11 Ordinary Meetings held and one Retreat.

Number of Ordinary Meetings attended by Elders:

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|--------------------------------|------|
| Robert Green | - 9 |
| Rev. Lindsay Ferrington | - 10 |
| Stephen Gould | - 10 |
| Rev. Bruce | -10 |
| Craig Morrison | - 11 |
| Rev. William Morrow | - 11 |
| Imre Nagy | - 10 |
| John Pickering | - 7 |
| Kevin Sylvester | - 11 |
| Geoffrey Westcott | - 6 |

2008 was a wonderful year of growth, may God Bless His Church in Penrith for continued growth in the coming years.

Imre Nagy (Session Clerk)