

fellow workers

news from around the presbyterian church of victoria



News from Broadford
Presbyterian Church
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GOOD FOOD FOR BODY AND SOUL AT MFC



To attend the PCV Ministry Family Camp (MFC) in September, we made a 907.6km, 11 hour round trip from Wodonga to Phillip Island - and it was worth every kilometre, every minute and every cent!

Although there were not, in fact, a thousand tongues in residence, it certainly sounded like it as the camp began by singing our great Redeemer's praise, and the quality of the singing continued throughout the camp as it began, ably led by Andy May and a team of talented musicians.

Anne Elliott's team did a marvelous job of organising around 200

campers, many of them children, even taking into account the vagaries of the weather - scheduling outdoor activities for the predicted fine weather on the Tuesday and indoor activities for the predicted wet weather on the Wednesday. As we have come to expect, the PYV did an outstanding job with the younger family members (and there were heaps of them!), so much so that most, if not all, of the parents saw very little of their children during daylight hours. The Wednesday night camp concert was a further tribute to the input the PYV had into the children's

enjoyment and learning, as well as an indication of the often otherwise hidden talents of some of our ministers.

For those who weren't in those categories, the four talks by Peter Brain, Anglican Bishop of Armidale, NSW, on Thanksgiving, Forgiveness, Contentment and Perseverance, certainly made attendance well worthwhile. His addresses were based on talks he originally gave at his Diocesan Summer School in January, 2009. (They can be downloaded from www.armidaleanglicandiocese.com - go to Publications, then

In the photo above: Children (and PYV leaders) at the Ministry Family Camp showing their sillier sides

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Deadline
for next
FW edition:
10 Feb 2012

Encouragement from our sister church



The children answer questions as Kevin from Canterbury gives a Bible talk

On Sunday 25 September, we had the pleasure of about 20 people from the Canterbury Presbyterian Church joining us in our Combined Skipton/Lismore Worship Service at Skipton. After the long drive from Melbourne, our brothers and sisters in Christ joined us for our Worship Service, and it was a joy to see our congregation increased considerably. Following the service, we enjoyed a hearty country spread and very encouraging fellowship together. After the service and the combined luncheon, the young people who joined us experienced a part of the country life by going to a local farm.

During the church service, Joy Venning, the Canterbury Youth Ministry Team Leader, carried out the children's talk in which she spoke of sharing the special gift which Jesus has given us with those about us. She went on to say that this is why they came to

Skipton and Lismore, to share the great gift which has been given to them with the children in this area. During the next week, four of the young people from the Canterbury Presbyterian church (Joy Venning, Lilly Lietz, Maddy O'Brien & Kevin Yeon) carried out a Holiday Program for the Primary aged children in the town.

After a very successful week, we concluded with a concert and BBQ on the Friday. We were joined again by several other members of the Canterbury Presbyterian Church. We thank these special brothers and sisters in Christ for the hard work and support which has been

given to us, and especially for the time and effort which has gone into the Holiday Program. It has been a great encouragement and blessing to the Skipton and Lismore Congregations to have a sister church relationship with Canterbury Church, and to know that there are people praying for the work in this district.

Esther McKerrow



Canterbury youth enjoyed country hospitality, including a ute ride!



Annual Naval Service at St John's Bendigo



Pete Ritchie, Lt. Comm. John Wilson, Rev. Philip Burns

Sunday October 23 saw a full church at St John's Bendigo for the Annual Naval service. The service is held each year and is

attended by the Cadets of TS (Training School) Bendigo, members of the Bendigo and District ex-Naval-men's Club, their special

guest of honour, Lieutenant Commander John Wilson, RAN, of HMAS Stuart, who was also born and bred in Bendigo, and our own church family.

The guest preacher was Pete Ritchie from 'Fighting Words Ministries' in Albury, NSW. Pete very carefully opened up 2 Peter

3 and related how God would one day 'clean up the mess in the world' when Jesus returns and that the only way to be ready for

that event was to belong to Jesus now. After the service congregational members had opportunity to welcome our many guests over morning tea. We rejoice that so many are willing

to come each year to hear the gospel, but ask for prayer that the gospel seeds planted each year, especially in the hearts of the teenage cadets, would result in eternal fruit for the Kingdom of God.

*Rev. Philip Burns
Minister, St John's Presbyterian Church*

┌ 'We rejoice that so many are willing to come each year to hear the gospel, but ask for prayer that the gospel seeds planted in the hearts of the teenage cadets would result in eternal fruit.'



Realising Hope: a testimony

My first memories are of 'Hillview', my home. It was set on a hill overlooking the town of Nhill where I was born on 9th December 1949. I lived there with my grandmother, grandfather, mother, brother and sister. Due to difficulties in their marriage, my mother and father were not living together at the time. 'Hillview' was a small white-washed house with a large garden. I loved to play on the swing and hang out with my brother and sister. I have treasured memories of that time: playing in the garden, eating chocolate biscuits and other escapades. My childhood was relatively secure and carefree. After Granddad died, my grandmother could not afford the rent, and we moved out to the farm to live with Dad.

My school days began at a little country school where I was bullied mercilessly. After about six months, I fell terribly ill with pneumonia and pleurisy and almost died. It was a long road back to recovery, but then I went to Nhill state school where I had a few friends. Those were happy days. At eleven years old, I began piano lessons with Miss Frances Kennedy.

I heard about Jesus from an evangelist and I 'accepted' Christ as my Saviour but not as Lord. I forgot about God the next day. My grandmother would always read to me and tell me about Jesus. She would get me to say, 'Come into my heart Lord Jesus, there's room in my heart for you.' It was to be years before I would mean that prayer sincerely.

To begin with, I had a good time going to High School. Things changed, however, when I was frightened by the discovery of the unpardonable sin found in Mat-

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The Annual Presbyterian Churches Picnic

28th January 2012
Botanical Gardens
Melbourne
12pm

Enter via the Anderson Street Gate B.
BYO food, drinks, seats, picnic rugs and look for
the happy people! ☺

'A mighty God-ordained Movement'

Albert Victor Norris had come to Australia from England as an 18 year old and, when the First World War broke out, joined the AIF and fought with his regiment at Fromelles, where he was wounded. Repatriated to England, Albert met Blanche, whom he later married. After the war, Albert with his wife Blanche Mary and their two young sons, Roy and Keith, migrated to Australia. In the 1920s, when Heathmont village was nothing more than a general store and Canterbury Rd. was just a dirt track, Albert and Blanche arrived at Ringwood station and caught a horse drawn Hansom cab that would take them and their two boys to the block that was to be their home for many years to come. For a while they lived in the small two room cottage that was already there, but needing more room, they soon demolished that to build the house that is still here today at 268 Canterbury Rd.

The tough years of recovery after the Great War gave way to even harder years of the Great De-pression when swaggies wandered up and down Canterbury Rd. looking to do an odd job or for a handout from the few locals, leaving stones on the fence as a silent signal to their swaggie mates that here or there lived someone who would give a needy bloke a hand. If they knocked on the door at no. 268, they would have heard Blanche's welcoming voice calling them to come in. Blanche would never turn them away but, whether they wanted it or not, with their cuppa and bite to eat, would tell them about her Lord Jesus Christ. She was a remarkable woman;

tiny in stature and quiet of voice, but even those passing by on Canterbury Rd. would hear her singing hymns of praise to her Saviour at the top of her voice. She began to be crippled by rheumatoid arthritis from the earliest years of her mar-



Blanche Norris

ried life, with her hands becoming progressively more twisted by this untreatable disease so that, before long, she could do little for herself or her family, and pain was her constant companion. Nevertheless, she never blamed God, nor did she ever stop praising Him for His loving goodness to her and her family.

Instead, she and Albert, who himself owned a vibrant faith, were outgoing to all and sundry, taking in two slum kids to bring up and another child given to them by parents who couldn't afford to

keep him. At one stage they built a cottage behind their own home to house an itinerant missionary, who stayed there until he married and moved away, only to then accommodate a family who had nowhere else to go. They only had Albert's railman's wage, but there always seemed to be enough to go around. There's no denying that Albert was an incredible bloke. A strong, wiry man, Albert had to do everything for Blanche. He would get the boys off to school, cook and clean and set Blanche up for the day before he left to catch a train from Ringwood (when trains ran only every two hours) to work the afternoon to midnight shift at the North Melbourne railway yards as chief shunter. It was said that his voice could be heard from anywhere in the yard. As part of his Christian commitment, Albert did lay preaching. Blanche, with her great knowledge of Scripture, would help him by suggesting ideas for sermons and then they'd work to put the messages together. For Albert, distance was no object and no amount of effort too much in the Lord's service. Some Sundays, Albert would take the family to catch a train, picking up Blanche in her wheel chair to carry her across the railway line to the Ringwood station, from where they travelled far and wide to preach, even as far as Hurstbridge. Each year they would go to the Upwey Convention (now called the Belgrave Heights Convention). But he had to push Blanche in her wheel chair up hill from the Fern-tree Gully station to the Convention because they couldn't get her wheel chair on the bus. Later, they



The remarkable story of how God answered a prayer for a house

bought a block in Upwey on which they would camp, eventually building a house on it that they rented out.

After many years of suffering, Blanche finally succumbed to the effects of her disease, dying in her late sixties. After that, Albert himself, becoming more frail and wanting to be nearer the station, offered to swap his land for a block the Presbyterians owned at 118 Heathmont Rd. but could not build a church on because it was too small. Though it seemed as though the Presbyterians got the better of the deal, as far as Albert was concerned it was 'a congenial exchange', as Norma put it, since Albert didn't have so far to walk to get to the Heathmont station.

Thus began to unfold what we see completed today. Each day, after Albert had departed for work, Blanche would spend many hours on her verandah singing hymns and praying, and it was one of these prayers that is significant for us today. It was Blanche's prayer, as she passed the time alone at home, that their land and house would one day be used by the Presbyterian Church. Earlier on in their time at Heathmont, there was only a Methodist church in Heathmont and, as committed Christians desiring to worship with their family, that's where they went. Later, when the Presbyterian Church opened in Adelaide St. Ringwood, they became members there. But it was Albert's 'congenial exchange' that began to see Blanche's prayer come to fruition, as building began on the new Heathmont Presbyterian Church in Waterloo St. At their marriage

in 1943, and before Blanche's death, Albert and Blanche's son Keith and his wife Norma had built a house on land subdivided from the back of the main block - now no. 8 Waterloo St - adjacent to the new church site. It was Keith



Albert Norris

and Norma's son, Craig who, as a 2 year old toddler, 'took notice of every nail that God nailed in' as this new building took shape. At its completion, the family transferred their membership from the Adelaide St. Presbyterian Church to the newly opened Heathmont Church.

But it was to be another few decades before the house was to also be fully utilized as part of the Heathmont Presbyterian witness. For some years it was used as a government-sponsored youth drop in centre, followed by twenty-two

years as Penumbra community group for vision impaired people. Only in October 2008, when the youth arm of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Presbyterian Youth Victoria (PYV), found itself in urgent need of accommodation, did the Heathmont Presbyterian congregation catch a vision that this house should not be demolished (as was planned, such was its decrepit state) but that it should be transformed for use by, not only the PYV, but by other committees of the denomination as well. Much has happened since to bring this about.

Today we celebrate God's faithfulness in answering a saint's prayers in bringing this project about, and acknowledge this congregation's hard work, the generous gifts of labour, money and materials from other churches, presbytery, companies and individuals as their share in this vision. As Norma said, 'It's a mighty God-ordained movement'.

(This transcript taken from an interview with Keith and Norma Norris, Friday 29th July, 2011)

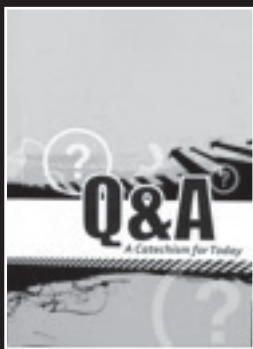
TO THE GLORY OF GOD
Heathmont House was opened
and dedicated by the
Moderator of the Presbyterian
Church of Victoria, the Rt. Rev.
Andrew Bray,
Sunday 4th September, 2011

*Rev. Andrew Venn
Minister, Heathmont Presbyterian Church*

Q & A:

A Catechism for Today

The Shorter Catechism in modern English



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Realising Hope: a testimony

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threw 12, verses 31 and 32. Filled with fear and guilt, after months of worrying, I became very ill with severe depression and had a nervous breakdown. There was an aching yearning in my heart for God's love, something which I thought I had lost forever. My school career ended.

I experienced a seemingly endless round of doctors, hospitals and prescription drugs, followed by complete apathy. I lost my youth and life became an awful tangle. This went on for years until finally I was to have a revelation.

One night I was sitting on my bed in the dark, planning my own demise, when two Bible verses came to mind. They were, 'Though Thou hast crushed and broke me, I will be happy again' [Psalm

51:8] and 'The terrors of Sheol surrounded me'. These two verses described me. A glimmer of hope shone through. Some peace stole into my life. I was still on the rocky road of depression, but God was leading me toward the light. The Bible was to become a beacon of light for me, instead of a book of condemnation. I began to understand God's love, even though the fear of having committed the unpardonable sin had really screwed me up physically, mentally and emotionally.

I found a gospel-preaching minister in the Presbyterian Church, and I continued to find God's word helpful and comforting. I found God to be a God of love, and not punishment. Whenever my depression overcame me, I would

feel far away from God, and feel like not even he could help me. But then I would realise that God was always there when I cried out to him. I have discovered just how all encompassing God's love and provision is, and how all enfolding his grace. My minister, Ian, has pointed out a verse in the Bible about the witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and the assurance he gives that we belong to God [Romans 8:16].

Finally I found the answers. I know that no matter how much I let God down, he saves me and keeps me saved. I have received Jesus as Saviour and Lord and am realizing hope. Peace, joy and security are becoming an ongoing reality.

Eunice C Cramer



FELLOW WORKERS

News from Broadford Presbyterian Church



The ladies' prayer group of Broadford Presbyterian Church meets regularly

We would like to introduce ourselves and let you know what we've been doing in 2011. We are a small church 74km north of Melbourne, off the Hume Highway. We have members from the Broadford district, and also from Strath Creek, Gooram, Seymour, Kilmore, Wallan, Tallarook, Sunbury and Epping.

Our year started with the Annual Presbyterian Churches Picnic, at the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne on the 29th January. Held on a lovely sunny day, people came from as far away as Frankston.

Early in the year we conducted a holiday kids club for the first time. It was a great success. Both the children and the workers had a good time.

Over the last couple of years we have had 'moveable feasts', where families open their homes to the congregation and nominate a theme for the dinner. Our themes have included Lebanese, Aussie BBQ, Italian and Cowboy. These are always well attended.

Other church events in 2011 were visits from missionaries,

including the Short family (Niger), the Archers (Central Asia), the Dennesses (Asia), Martin Eagle (Myanmar), the Keens (Malawi) and the Manners (Africa), and a visit from Creation Ministries. We also have regular Bible studies, Sunday school, Ladies' Prayer group and kids club.

We are praying that our new church hall will be completed this year to allow us to have some more outreach programs.

We would like to remind everyone that the next Annual Presbyterian Churches Picnic will be on 28th January, 2012 at the Botanical Gardens. We hope to see you all there.

*Lorraine Coleman
Broadford Presbyterian Church*



Kids enjoyed games at the holiday club

PYV CAMPS 2012

EIGHTEENTHIRTY

A retreat for young adults
Camp Acacia, Halls Gap
Saturday 10th to Monday 12th
March 2012
Speaker: Ben Nelson, elder at
South Yarra Presbyterian

WEST

Norval Lodge, Halls Gap
Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th
April 2012
Speaker: Jared Keath, 4th year
candidate at PTC

NORTH

Crystal Creek Christian Camp,
Alexandra
Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd
September 2012
Speaker: Heath Easton,
Assistant Pastor at Drouin
Presbyterian

EAST

Oasis Christian Camp, Mount
Evelyn
Friday 28th to Sunday 30th
September 2012
Speaker: Rev. Ben Johnson,
Senior Pastor at Warrnambool
Presbyterian

SUMMER

Campaspe Downs Country
Resort, Kyneton
Thursday 27th December 2012
to Tuesday 1st January 2013
Speaker: Rev. Brian Harvey,
Senior Pastor at Warburton
Presbyterian

Find all the details on Presbyterian Youth Victoria's camps, events and training at pyv.org.au

Good food for body and soul at MFC

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Bishop's Summer Schools.) Peter presented his talks with biblical insight, wide-ranging research, energy, humour, candour and a 'personal touch' which made them very applicable to those of us who heard him, whether men or women, in full time ministry or training or retirement.

The only difficult choice campers had to make was in relation to the workshops: should I learn about

the World Reformed Fellowship from Allan Harman or Self-Care in the Ministry from Peter Brain? Should I find out more about Bible Advocacy from David Wilson or PeaceWise from Bob Carner?

By way of summary, it's safe to say there was plenty of good food for both body and soul (those ladies who desired to do so managed a trip to the Phillip Island Chocolate Factory); the challenge of canoes, the giant swing and flying fox and a game

of soccer; time for corporate prayer each day (as well as one hour Prayer Groups on Monday night); presentations by a number of our missionaries (and one soon to be missionary); sufficient time to catch up with old friends and make new ones - but perhaps not enough time to do all those things and have a good night's sleep.

The only possible drawback to having



The kids had opportunities to try new things



the Ministry Family Camp in the first week of the September school holidays seems to be its proximity to the October Assembly. Perhaps we could encourage the Commissioners to meet in (residential) General Assembly at Phillip Island Adventure Resort in the second week...

*Neil and Barbara Harvey,
(By God's grace) thankful, forgiven,
contented and persevering campers*

Ballarat Presbytery Social Evening

Ballarat Presbytery had a wonderful social evening on 16 September 2011 for all Presbytery members and families. Around 26 children and adults enjoyed warm fellowship and hospitality at the home of Ian and Ann Hutton, Minister at Ballarat West Parish.

It was also an opportunity to welcome Rev Grant Vayne and

Mrs Esther Vayne to Ararat Parish. It was great seeing everyone mingling freely with one another, from the youngest to the older. Special thanks to Ian and Ann once again for making it such a great evening!

*K. Hui Lim
Promotion Officer
Ballarat Presbytery*

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