

TOGETHER IN MISSION



PICTURED: REV BETH HOY IS ORDAINED AT ABERFOYLE PARK BAPTIST ON 9TH JANUARY 2022

In this edition:

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MOUNT GAMBIER BAPTIST

NEW BAPTIST CARE SA CEO'S FIRST ADDRESS

12 WAYS TO BE A BETTER NEIGHBOUR IN 2022

NEWS FROM MITCHAM, EDWARDSTOWN, SOUL FOOD, AND MORE!



Staying Connected

At the beginning of 2021, none of us could have predicted the strange times ahead of us.

Families separated by border closures, people working from home more than ever, home isolation, and face masks being worn indoors. The list goes on.

Each of these things has challenged our experience of community, both in the world and in the Church.

'Online Church' has connected us to church services and at times to church community, but we're arguably more disconnected now than we've ever been.

With that in mind, here's **four ways to stay connected in disconnected times.**

1. *Remember why community matters*

At the heart of Christian faith is the concept of community.

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE

How to stay connected in disconnected times

CONTINUED FROM COVER

God exists eternally in relationship within the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through Christ we are reconciled into relationship with God.

We are also brought into relationship with other believers, becoming one body and one family; brothers and sisters in Christ.

Christianity is not an individualistic faith. It's all about relationship.

We don't go to Church; we are the Church. Jesus said, "by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Community is not optional.

2. Make community a priority

The author of Hebrews writes to their readers to spur them on toward a living, thriving faith saying, "let us...not stop meeting together as some are in the habit of doing". (Hebrews 10:25)

The truth is we are all creatures of habit. We have good habits, and we have bad habits. Bad habits develop easily enough, good habits require effort and

intentionality to develop and maintain.

It might be convenient to listen to a sermon while you go for a jog or drive to work, but if you want to experience the fullness of faith, it's crucial to make community a priority and plan how you will form the good habits your best intentions desire.

So how will you prioritise Church community in 2022?

3. Think beyond Sunday

Our Sunday services are the one time every week when the whole church comes together to worship and be in community.

But Church is so much more than a Sunday. Church exists every time we meet together with fellow believers, in groups large and small and in gatherings planned and unplanned.

A simple phone call or encouraging message call can make someone's week. Think beyond Sunday and make community a seven-day-a-week practice.

4. Consider those who are most isolated

At this time, we need to think of those most vulnerable in our churches and wider community.

There are many people who would love to be in church, but can't because they are immunocompromised, in isolation, or awaiting test results.

These people especially need our love and care to help them through this strange season. Who can you reach out to and bless at this time?

It's never been more important for the Church to come together and be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Be encouraged to make Church a priority and stay connected in a disconnected time.



Rev Mark Sanders
Church Development Facilitator



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Fiona Smith named new Director of International Programs at Baptist World Aid

Effective 1 January 2022, Fiona Smith will become the new Director of International Programs for Transform Aid International/Baptist World Aid, reporting directly to CEO Melissa Lipsett as part of TAI's Senior Leadership Team.

"This is a really exciting development for TAI, and a good example of supporting the ongoing growth and development of the next generation of leaders in the global Baptist movement," Melissa said.

Fiona has been with TAI for over two years, and in that time has become a well-respected leader within the Programs team and across the organisation, helping to navigate and support the team and our global Partners throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

During her time as International Programs Manager (private funding), and throughout the interim period following Dan Skehan's departure, Fiona has demonstrated competence, maturity and passion for this role.

She's made valuable contributions in the areas of child and youth programming, development effectiveness, and strategic positioning to fulfill our mission.

Fiona grew up in the Baptist Church within Australia, and through her involvement with Baptist World Aid Catalyst groups, God inspired her passion

for social justice and global development.

"That's why I pursued experiences overseas in diverse contexts including South Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, working alongside faith-based organisations on child development and holistic transformation," Fiona said.

"I'm honoured to step into this role and new season of leadership in an organisation that's been so formative for me."

Now with over 10 years of experience in child-focused community development, advocacy, and NGO leadership in four countries, Fiona brings a personal wisdom and professional commitment to development in her role.

Prior to joining TAI, Fiona served in a start-up company seeking to apply data and new technology towards sustainable development. She holds a Masters in Public Policy (MPP) from the University of Oxford, and degrees in Law and Arts (Communications) from the University of Technology Sydney.

"I am looking forward to working closely with Fiona as we embark upon our new five-year strategy," Melissa said.

"She is the right person for this next season as we pursue our mission to end poverty so that all people can enjoy the fullness of life God intends."



Baptist World Aid Australia has been the heart and hands of Australian Baptists since 1959.

Today, we work with 38 local Christian Partners through 73 projects in 18 countries to end poverty, so that all people can enjoy the fullness of life God intends.



Jo Kadlecsek
Communication Manager
Baptist World Aid Australia

An Invitation to Mitcham Baptist Church's Final Morning Service

After a long and fruitful history reaching back to the earliest days of settlement in South Australia, the Mitcham Baptist Church is coming to an end in its current form.

As of February 2022 the present membership of MBC will 'wind up', and Rev. Keith Chessell will retire as Pastor of MBC.

BCSA will then begin exploring possibilities for establishing a new

worshipping community in the existing facility.

Rev. Keith Chessell will continue his weekly Bible teaching classes at MBC - through Covenant Life Ministry, on Sunday and Wednesday afternoons (as well as at Victor Harbor on Thursday afternoons.)

On Sunday 13th February 2022 at 10.30 am, there will be a Final Morning Service at Mitcham Baptist Church.

You are invited to share in this time as we give thanks to the Lord for the blessing MBC has been to so many lives and to recognise and show appreciation of the ministry of Rev. Keith and Joan Chessell, who first began their ministry at MBC in February 1982.

There will be a special morning tea following the service - to which all are invited.

Edwardstown Baptist is creating a community where everyone belongs



It's Tuesday and the carpark of Edwardstown Baptist Church is packed. The Community Centre is buzzing with activity; people cook busily in the kitchen, groups leave with armful of groceries for delivery, and dozens of guests arrive to enjoy a shared meal.

The community is deliberately inclusive, with people of all walks of life, ages and abilities taking part and finding a shared sense of family.

For years, Edwardstown Baptist Church has run Gwen's Pantry, a program run by volunteers that distributes food donations from supermarkets to local schools. They were also running a small friendship program. But when a young man with a disability volunteered to help, incredible changes began to take place.

Today between 50-60 people attend the Friendship Club each week, with more than 50% identifying as having a disability. Activities include basketball, cooking classes, assisting in the Gwen's Pantry food run, card making, snooker and once-monthly celebrations such as a disco or sports night.

They also help cook and serve a meal each week for themselves, their carers, and anyone else who would like to join in.

The church is also working closely with Lutheran Disability Services who are now co-located at the site.

"The beauty of it is that we have people who never found their place before who feel part of this community and this family. It's just been such a huge success," says Pastor Patrick Gillespie.

"But the real strength has been the difference it has made to our church. It's really helped us be connected to the local community, rather than operating in isolation. It's benefitted our whole congregation – and put a lot of health into our church."

The Edwardstown Baptist Church is an excellent example of how with just a little bit of thought and planning, church activities can become so much more inclusive. For example, they have recently planned and planted a garden that is accessible to everyone.

A wheelchair access ramp has been installed and food is grown in raised planter boxes, which have been built allowing plenty of space in between so that gardeners can work comfortably. The harvested crops replenish the shelves of Gwen's Pantry.

"It doesn't matter if you identify as having a disability or not. It's about giving back to the community, and everyone can do that.

"We just wanted to create a community where everyone belongs."

Lighting the Darkness - CEO Shane Austin's first address

Vulnerability is the risk or quality of being easily harmed. Many of us have experienced a sense of this over the last two years. We don't like being vulnerable to injury or hurt, do we?

For many in society, being vulnerable is a state that existed well before a global pandemic, and not something easily cast-off.

A vulnerable individual, or group, often find themselves as outsiders, rejected, or looked down on.

They can be disenfranchised and powerless, susceptible to, and impacted by, injury and harm.

In the gospel narrative, we see Jesus, continually engaging, walking alongside, and sharing a table with the outsider; the despised and ignored.

He was continually drawn to the vulnerable. We are called to walk with Him, and to act in His stead.

The pandemic has hit vulnerable communities hard. During this time, the Baptist Care SA team have persevered in support and empowerment of these individuals, doing so under challenging, complex and more demanding conditions.

I want my first action as the new CEO to be a shout out and acknowledgement to the extraordinary team at Baptist Care SA for their ongoing work and diligence in trying times.

This is accompanied by a heartfelt thank you to all of you in the Baptist Movement in South Australia for your ongoing support of Baptist Care SA.

The year 2022 may appear unclear and to some, feel a little dark. Can I encourage you with Psalm 119:105 (NIV),

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path".

As we know, the Word made flesh is Jesus, and today His Spirit is with us.

This short verse shows us that with the guidance of Jesus, our feet (where we are stepping now), and our path (where we are heading) is clearer.

You see, we only need lamp or light when it is difficult to see our current and future steps.

So be reassured, when it is dark or unclear, when we are vulnerable, and when we minister to and with those who are vulnerable, we always have a guide both by our side and ahead of us, to show us our next step and direction.

In gratitude.



Shane Austin
CEO

Baptist Care SA

Baptist Care SA Christmas Appeal 2021 – Wrapped Up!

Christmas is about love, hope and joy. It is a time when we celebrate the ultimate gift of Jesus Christ that was freely given for all of humankind, and when we respond to His call to care for each other.

After almost two years of uncertainty, worry and financial hardship wrought by the pandemic, we were humbled by the support received for our *Christmas Appeal 2021* which blessed over 1000 South Australians with a special Christmas treat!

Heartfelt thanks to all our supporters and churches who share in our mission to care for people in need at Christmas and throughout the year.

Some of the incredible support from our churches included:

- *Hope Valley Church donated 90 new handbags filled with gifts to bless women visiting our WestCare Centre during December*
- *The children of Knightsbridge Baptist Church baked and decorated 20 beautiful gingerbread houses*
- *Influencer's Church – Adelaide City donated an incredible 200 gifts*
- *Volunteers from the Mount Gambier Baptist Church thoughtfully purchased hundreds of*

presents for children across the Limestone Coast.

WestCare Toy Appeal

650 children and young people across Adelaide received gifts from their parents who came to shop freely at our WestCare Christmas cave – an increase of 50% from last year!

Many of the parents who came to 'shop' were experiencing homelessness, new Australians, linguistically diverse community members or had been affected by COVID-19.

Christmas Lunch

At the WestCare Centre on Christmas Day 117 people, including young children, enjoyed al fresco dining in the sunshine as they shared a feast of beef, seafood, hearty vegetables, salad, and pudding.

Roundwood Solutions Limestone Coast Toy Run

Down south, the third Roundwood Solutions Limestone Coast Toy Run hosted by Baptist Care SA raised thousands of dollars to buy 400 gifts for families doing it tough in the region.

Almost 200 motorbikes and vehicles took part in the event which has become a much-loved local tradition.



It was an incredible effort, and we thank the many volunteers and staff involved; the Playford Baptist, Lighthouse Community, Hackham Baptist, Unley Park Baptist, Hope Valley, Enjoy, Sunset Rock Uniting and Hills Baptist Churches for their support, and all who donated!

BAPTISMS



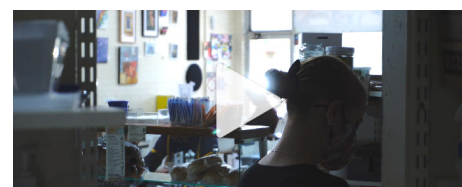
2021 was a radical year of baptisms, with over 260 across our Movement over 12 months!

Featured in this month's edition are Jubilee and Boaz Salmon from Village Church in Melrose Park, baptised on 29th Nov 2021 by Rev Nona Gregory.

Congratulations to everyone baptised in 2021! We cannot wait to see what is in store across our Movement in 2022.

Don't forget to send baptism photos and information to Ruth at rgrace@sabaptist.asn.au

SOUL FOOD COMMUNITY CAFE



Ever considered what being on mission in your local community looks like?

A project inherited by Glenn & Flick Pederick, Soul Food supports and enriches its neighbourhood in ways not seen in most traditional Baptist churches.

Based in Redwood Park, see why the local residents have fallen in love with Soul Food.

Check it out at: www.vimeo.com/666648640

12 WAYS TO BE A BETTER NEIGHBOUR IN 2022

If 2021 taught us anything, it's the power of connecting with others. Take a moment to think about how you felt when someone connected with you. While small acts of love may seem mundane, they can achieve extraordinary things.

They can lift a broken spirit, provide refreshment for the soul, even bring justice for people across the world. Want to show love to others in the new year, but unsure where to start? Here are 12 ways you can be a better neighbour.



Step outside your social circle.

Our neighbours aren't just those we're familiar with. According to Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, they include those different to us – even strangers. In 2022, challenge yourself to say hello to someone you wouldn't ordinarily talk to. You might find friendship where you least expect it.

Make time for others.

Can't find a time sooner than a month away to catch up with somebody? We live in a busy society, often rushing from one thing to the next. Intentionally clearing some space in your schedule can help you create time to invest in people and say 'yes' to new opportunities to serve others.

Open your front door.

Hospitality isn't about flexing an Instagram-worthy home, or cooking elaborate meals. It's simply about welcoming people like Jesus does, and being genuinely interested in their lives. Inviting someone to share a cuppa or join your family for a meal is a real blessing, especially to those who are lonely.

Be an informed neighbour.

This doesn't mean catching up on the latest gossip! It's hard to love people when you don't know what they need. Ask someone how they're really going, or be a better global neighbour by learning more

about the struggles other communities face. BWA's *Catalyst* program can help you stay informed about issues of injustice.

Stretch your prayers beyond your own backyard.

It's easy to limit prayers to the people in our orbit. Challenge yourself to pray beyond your own backyard. Start with national issues such as domestic violence, and Indigenous inequality, then pray for those around the world. Download BWA's *prayer calendar* to get started.

Create a community.

There are many ways to connect with people in your local area. Set up your own street library, start a communal veggie patch for your apartment block, run an online book club, organise a backyard barbecue. Lean into whatever interests you and invite people to join.

Use your words to bless others.

Proverbs 16:24 describes gracious words as honeycomb: "*sweet to the soul and healing to the bones*". A kind word can be a powerful encouragement. Form a habit of praising people, text someone to let them know you're praying for them, or go old-school by writing a letter to a friend.

Change your consumer habits.

Our consumption has an impact – from garment workers facing inequitable conditions to communities dealing with the consequences of climate change. If changing every habit is overwhelming, begin with one manageable area, such as your clothing purchases.

Be an advocate.

We often scroll through our phones, read a headline and feel burdened, but that's where it ends. Take the next step and speak out. Give feedback to companies that perpetrate injustice, sign a petition, or write to your member of Parliament. You can find your MP's email address on the Parliament of Australia website.

Share with those in need.

Who could forget the toilet paper hoarding of 2021? God calls us to act differently. Accounts of the early Church paint a wonderful image of Christians sharing abundantly with those in need. Follow their example and offer what you have to others, so we can build communities that reflect Christ-like love.

Consider giving financially.

It's not about the amount you give, but the heart behind it. Giving to vulnerable communities is a great way to be a better neighbour. Think creatively – ask for a donation instead of birthday gifts, go without takeaway or Netflix so you can sacrificially give, or organise a fundraising event with friends.

Show mercy (and learn to let it go).

It's often the small things that irritate us: bad driving, inconsiderate behaviour, a rude comment. Instead of firing back or holding a grudge, respond with grace. There may be a deeper reason for that person's behaviour. And a gentle response paves the path for neighbourly love.



Sophia Russell
Baptist World Aid Australia

"Cautiously Poised for Mission" - The latest from Mount Gambier Baptist Church

Mount Gambier Baptist Church is unique to our Movement in its environment, current climate, and socio-economic makeup.

Situated in an ethnically diverse regional hub full of both professional and blue-collar opportunities, "the Mount's" proximity to Victoria has seen anxiety towards COVID-19 escalate.

However, the church's unique position brings with it rare opportunity, and 2021 has proven to be a season of careful optimism.

Pastor Cam Buchanan, who has served the church alongside his wife Jenny since 2016, was quick to champion the nine baptisms that took place in 2021.

"We've had more baptisms this year than we've [had] in the last five years. It's a really cool thing to see people taking steps forward in their faith," exclaimed Cam.

"That's been a real focus over the last 12 months. Each time we've been calling for baptism services, people of all ages and ethnic groups are putting their hand up."

Mount Gambier Baptist aims to mirror the cross-section of community found in the 30,000-strong town, and this is reflected in their programs, rhythms, and events. Their playgroup is an often-unsung example, reaching both their church community and those beyond.

"It's been running under the radar for a long time, [but] in the last 12 months it's really taken off in a huge way, with a great team running it and building on the legacy of this thing for many years now.

"Every Tuesday morning involves use of playground facilities, food, songs and activities, and attention given to the parents as well.

"And it's largely unchurched people. There have been people join the church [community] from it, so it does connect to the greater expression of who we are, but it is a community in and of itself as well."

The effects of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected the Limestone Coast region over the last two years, and with the concept of living with the pandemic now a reality, the fatigued region is facing new challenges.

"With the floodgates open, all of a sudden everybody's antsy and nervous in a way that you can probably dilute across Adelaide's population differently, but we feel it a lot because of the size of our community.

"My favourite café is closed today because apparently they had a positive COVID-19 case there, so I'm a bit crabby. All these little things pile up to make people nervous."

Alongside the seemingly endless challenges of the pandemic, Pastor Cam highlighted other difficulties of the past season that the church would like prayer for.

"There's been some unnecessary deaths going on. There's been road fatalities, some suicides that have really shaken the place up. There's a bit of a cloud over that stuff, every little thing causes a ripple and rattles us.

"We also have a large Burmese community, and what's happening in Myanmar right now is really hitting home. People here have relatives in these villages, which are getting bombed and burned.

"So, we have one part of our community which is really grieving at the moment in a strong way."

Excitingly, there's plenty to look forward to at Mount Gambier Baptist. February will be a month full of outreach, with their youth ministry running community barbecues in parks and hangouts across the city.

An inaugural evangelism conference featuring author and speaker John Dickson is slated for late-September. Unfazed that the event is likely to clash with AFL Grand Final day, Cam jokes, "let's face it, neither Port nor Adelaide are going to be there next season."



PICTURED: Adam and Annette Salicki's (centre) induction as the church's new Next Generation Pastors. Prayer from Ps Cam Buchanan and leaders of Mount Gambier Baptist's Karen and Congolese communities. The new couple have been "a real bolt of energy into the church," according to Cam.

Church-planting is a conversation on the horizon, after a year of experimentation with creative models of online and in-person church delivery.

"The Limestone Coast and everything south of the Dukes Highway is what's in our sights for future ministry. We've adopted that region as our Samaritan focus. Places like Penola, possibly even Casterton just over the Victorian border, all towns of 1000-1500 people.

"Whether it be a gathering or a table, I'm determined that we can have a witness in those spaces."

Please keep Mount Gambier Baptist Church in your prayers as we enter 2022!



Benito Carbone
Editor



Keen for Leadership Internship 2022? Applications are closing soon!



Applications for our 2022 Leadership Internship are closing soon! We would love to meet the emerging leaders in your church and see them step into their next adventure. Who can you tap on the shoulder today?

To view the schedule, find further information, or to apply, visit

www.sabaptist.asn.au/internship/

Or call Elliot at the Baptist Centre on 8357 1755

Become an BCSA Associate Board Member!

Under 30 years of age? Active in your Local Baptist church? Curious about Governance and being a Board member?

Thinking you'd like to see a Board at work from the inside?

There are opportunities for young Baptist women and men to join the Baptist Churches of SA Board as Associate Board members.

The recently adopted Associate Board Member model is a creative approach to encouraging interested Baptist young people to join the Board.

The opportunity offers two way benefits – providing invaluable experience for the

participating individual by inclusion in Board discussions and the opportunities for observing different governance processes over a year.

The individual will also bring to the table their unique experiences and perspectives that will enrich discussions and contribute towards wise decision making.

For more information please contact Rev Dr Melinda Cousins at the Baptist Churches of SA office. Follow the link below to read the Information Pack.

<https://sabaptist.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/BCSA-Associate-Board-Member-Info-Pack.pdf>

Living in God

Commencing
February 2022

'Living in God' is the life-giving message of 1 and 2 Corinthians.

These two amazing letters of the apostle Paul speak powerfully to the church today. Together they uphold the calling of God to His people, to live true to the Gospel of Christ crucified.

Teacher: **Rev Keith Chessell**

Everyone Welcome!

- **Wednesday Afternoons**
Mitcham Baptist Church
5.00 – 7.15 pm
- **Thursday Afternoons**
Victor Harbor – CWA Centre
1.00 – 3.30 pm
- **Sunday Afternoons**
Mitcham Baptist Church
4.00 – 6.15 pm

COVENANT Life Ministry Inc.
20 Albert Street, Mitcham
8373 4409 or 0409 419 319
clmchessell@bigpond.com

Morialta Charitable Trust Fund

Morialta Charitable Trust Fund has been supporting disadvantaged Children, Young People and their families in South Australia through its annual program of Distributions for 40 years.

To enable the Fund to continue this support through Community Organisations in South Australia Morialta Charitable Trust Fund seeks donations from the public.

Donations of \$2- and above are Tax Deductible and can be forwarded to the Morialta Charitable Trust Fund at PO Box 92 Crafers SA 5152.