



Summer  
Edition  
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# Together *in Mission*

Baptist Churches SA & NT





# Churches spreading joy and the Gospel at Christmas

Christmas is an open door each year to the people outside our churches. It gives us a perfect opportunity to come together to celebrate and serve our community – whether that is to host a carols event, fundraiser for those in need, or directly serve the homeless.

These Baptist churches are meeting their community this Christmas season and sharing the good news of the gospel as they go.

Glen Osmond Baptist Church, in Adelaide’s inner southern suburbs, hosts ‘Carols on the Oval’ on Christmas Eve. Since 2020, the church has hosted the community outreach event featuring a free sausage sizzle, family-friendly activities, carol singing, and the sharing of the gospel message.

For Pastor Peter Swann, the event is an opportunity to celebrate with their community. Peter says, “Christmas is one of those events in the Australian calendar where we come together to celebrate something common, and it’s one

that, as a church, we actually get to partake in and lead the celebrations.”

Also in Adelaide’s inner south, Unley Park Baptist Church hosts a street party each year where they provide food and drink, sing carols and hymns together, and share the gospel with 300 people from their local community. They also take up an offering on the night to support the work of the WestCare Centre.

One of the focuses of the event is to create a bridge between the church and the wider community. “The street party builds a bridge,” says Pastor Jason Hoet. The church hosts a playgroup throughout the year, and the street party is another opportunity to engage with those 80 families. “They come along to this event, and it’s a bit more explicit on the Jesus side but still inviting. It just kind of puts another stepping stone down,” Jason says.

Up in the Northern Territory, Katherine Baptist Church, along with other local churches, hosts

Clockwise from left: Glen Osmond Baptist ‘Carols on the Oval’; Aberfoyle Park Baptist ‘Celebrate Christmas’; Glen Osmond ‘Carols on the Oval’; Casuarina Baptist ‘Carols by Candlelight’, Unley Park Baptist’s ‘Street Party’



words by  
**Lucy C Budzynska**  
Writer, Glen Osmond Baptist

many Christmas events throughout December. This includes a combined church service, a Christmas Carols Service in the town of Mataranka, and carol singing at Katherine Hospital. After their Christmas Day service, Pastors Kevin and Christina Young encourage those who can join them in helping the Salvos provide a Christmas lunch for over 100 people, many of whom are homeless.

For Kevin and Christina, each one of these events is an outreach opportunity and a chance to share the gospel with the people of Katherine. Kevin says, “The hope of the church is to try and get the message of salvation out to the community as much as possible.”

Christmas is the perfect opportunity for churches to connect with their communities, bringing joy and sharing the true meaning of the season.





# Casuarina Baptist stands with Myanmar

Casuarina Baptist Church welcomed the opportunity to Stand With Myanmar on Sunday 15th September in a campaign which saw Baptist World Aid and Baptist Mission Australia partner with local Baptist churches. The church family at Casuarina wanted to show their support for our Karen friends, their families still in Myanmar, and for all people from Myanmar who are suffering trauma and deprivation under an unjust military regime.

Casuarina Baptist has many Karen people from Myanmar in our congregation, most of whom came as refugees and are now settled in Darwin. They contribute to the life of our church in many valuable ways and also hold their own Karen Language service each Sunday at midday in the church.

Strong bonds of friendship and support have developed over

words by  
**Andrea Adams**  
Editor, *Belonging People*

the years with the Karen folk at Casuarina Baptist.

We were privileged to have Rev Steve Woods (Baptist World Aid) and his wife Vicki with us for the Stand with Myanmar Sunday service. Steve shared how we can support the people of Myanmar by praying, advocating to the Australian Government and giving financially.

Wah Eh, a respected leader in the NT Karen community, spoke movingly about the despair felt by Myanmar people in Australia, with the dire situation their loved ones are experiencing back home, with villages, schools and churches bombed and many lives lost.

For more NT stories head to [bcsant.org.au/belonging-people](https://bcsant.org.au/belonging-people)

## Together in Mission

Baptist Churches SA & NT

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### Join us in prayer

These prayer points have been provided by Chin, Kachin, Karen pastors and leaders from Australian Baptist churches.

#### We pray:

- For those who are particularly vulnerable, that they might receive the essential help they need for survival.
- For churches, leaders and the diaspora to courageously step up, stand strong and serve the people in these difficult times.
- For the refugees in Thailand, India and Malaysia to find safety and hope.
- For family members in Australia and for PEACE in Myanmar





## Assembly agenda full of celebration and change

*Clockwise from left: Nick van Ruth accepted into accreditation; Praying for Hope Arabic Church; Delegates join together in worship; Melinda welcomes Kings Baptist Grammar School as affiliate members; Scott Cadman prays for incoming president Elizabeth Moncrieff-Philp; Zo Baptist Church representatives; Broadview Baptist representatives*

The Annual Assembly, held on November 16, 2024, brought together representatives from the Baptist Churches of SA and NT to celebrate, make decisions, and reflect on the year. Hosted simultaneously at Rostrevor Baptist (SA) and Darwin Baptist (NT), the day began with worship and a short message before moving into business.

Highlights from the first session included the welcome of new member churches. Baptist Bush Church, Broadview Baptist Church, and Zo Baptist Church were accepted as full members, while Hope Arabic Church and King's Baptist Grammar School joined as affiliates. Congratulations to Nick van Ruth, who was accepted

for accreditation as a pastor. Additionally, Melinda Cousins was reappointed for another four-year term as Director of Ministries, continuing her leadership within BCSANT.

In the AGM session, election results for various governance roles were announced. MTC Advisory was reappointed as the auditor for the next three financial years, both annual and financial reports were presented and accepted by the Assembly, and Melinda reported on some of the activities in her role as Director of Ministries.

The gathering also included the Baptist Care SA AGM, where some big and important news was discussed. Baptist Care SA has

announced its proposed intention to merge with BaptistCare (NSW/ACT/WA) and Bapcare (Vic/Tas), becoming one national entity and securing this significant ministry into the future to better serve those who are most vulnerable in our community. A special Assembly will be held in February 2025 to vote on this proposal.

The Assembly concluded with inspiring stories from KimLean and Catherine Rogers, on home assignment with Baptist Mission Australia, and a good news story from Katherine Baptist. This was followed by prayer and the induction of the new President, Elizabeth Moncrieff-Philp.



### In other news

*Left: Richmond Baptist celebrates 130 years  
Right: Stefan Forsyth's baptism at Glen Osmond Baptist*





# Mannum breaks ground on new well-being facility

words by  
Rev Colin Nieass  
Mannum Community Church

In 2012, the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) revealed that Mid Murray had one of the highest rates of vulnerable children in South Australia. By 2018, the census showed 26.9% of children in the region were emotionally vulnerable – more than twice the state average (10.8%) and three times the national average (8.4%).

To address this issue, the Mid Murray Family Connections group was formed in 2013. This group, made up of government, medical, and community representatives, aimed to establish a Children's Wellbeing Centre in Mannum. However, due to the small rural population, government funding wasn't available.

Mannum Community Church stepped in, selling its chapel and

'Tea Rooms' to begin funding the project. Donations from groups such as Baptist Care SA, Mid Murray Council, and local organizations allowed a feasibility study to go ahead. The study confirmed the community's need for the center, emphasizing its potential to improve health and well-being.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 delayed progress, and the Family Connections group disbanded. Despite this, the church continued its mission. In 2022, they purchased the nearby Uniting Church property, close to the local school. Plans were created to add meeting rooms and connect the two auditoriums on-site.

The church has already partnered with the school for activities like music classes and seminars. It also hosts regular programs, including

Kids Club, youth group, yoga, and craft sessions. The planned facility will provide vital space for family and children's services, aiming to strengthen community ties, reduce isolation, and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

With construction now underway, Mannum Community Church is pressing forward despite rising costs. Turning the first sod on October 15 marked a significant milestone, but additional funding is needed as the church hadn't expected to shoulder the entire financial responsibility alone. Mannum Community Church warmly invites the community to join and support this exciting vision as it comes to life.





Above: Cate Rodgers and KimLean Leng

# Changes & Seasons

**Baptist  
Mission  
Australia**



## Cate and KimLean return to Cambodia

At the end of November, Cate and KimLean returned to Cambodia after three incredibly busy months in Australia. They spent time connecting with friends and partners in South Australia, as well as in Victoria and New South Wales. While Cate marks 15 years of service in Cambodia and together Cate and KimLean celebrate 2 years of marriage, they are both thrilled to be back in the place they call home. Continue to pray for Cate and KimLean as they travel, re-settle, and re-connect with their community. If you or your church are interested in partnering with Cate and KimLean in their ongoing ministry work, please get in contact ([lcornish@baptistmissionaustralia.org.au](mailto:lcornish@baptistmissionaustralia.org.au)).

## Language of the Heart

Rachel Hutchinson has completed her second visit to the Language of the Heart centre in Cambodia in November where she is providing oversight to those working in the centre. Continue to pray for Rachel and the centre as they bless the children and families they meet.

## Looking forward to 2025

On a personal note, I would like to say a huge THANK YOU to all the pastors and churches who have supported the work of Baptist Mission Australia in 2024. It is an immense joy to visit you all and I am excited to continue working with you throughout 2025. We know that none of the work we do happens without your faithful prayers and generous support.

I would also value your prayers as I move into an expanded role with a new title. I will continue to serve the churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory, but I am thrilled to now be serving the churches of Western Australia as well as the SA/NT and WA Church Relationship Manager.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, I pray you have a blessed time with family and friends, and may we continue to pray for those around the world and around the corner who are yet to know of Jesus' love for them.



words by **Lisa Cornish**  
State Director SA/NT





# A time of love



For many people, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. A time full of excitement, a chance to be with loved ones, to share stories, and make memories. However, for many others, Christmas can be really difficult. For people who are isolated from family, grieving the loss of loved ones, navigating strained relationships or experiencing financial hardship or homelessness, Christmas can be their loneliest time of year.

For Baptist Care SA, Christmas serves as a time to celebrate the gift of Christ and to extend His love and compassion to all people. It is a time when, as a community, we come together to demonstrate our Mission, especially to those who are at risk or marginalised, regardless of their circumstances.

Each year, through regular payroll deductions, our generous team of employees donate funds for around 80 gifts for some of our clients who are most in need. The gifts (primarily gift cards), are given to

children and young people aged between five and 18, who live in our care in youth and residential accommodation. We also provide gifts to adult disability clients who reside in our residential properties. The gifts, which are distributed by employees who have established relationships with our clients through their work, are often the only ones our clients will receive at Christmas.

We also collect toys, proudly donated by churches and other generous donors, and make them available for parents, grandparents and guardians who cannot afford to buy gifts. In the weeks before Christmas, our meeting rooms are transformed into a brightly decorated wonderland where toys are displayed for eligible people to make their choice of what they'd like to give to children in their care. Once chosen, the toys are then gift wrapped by our employees and volunteers and ready to be given as gifts.

On Christmas Day, we throw open the doors to the WestCare Centre and invite everyone to a shared lunch. At tables decorated with tinsel and baubles, and to the soundtrack of carols, more than 150 people join in a hearty meal cooked and served by our dedicated employees and volunteers who offer everybody a warm welcome. At a time when most people are catching up with family and friends around a table laden with food, our Christmas lunches offer comfort, companionship and sustenance to people who have nowhere else to go and no one else to see.

Because at this holy time of the year when we celebrate the birth of Christ who gave everything for us, our hearts embrace everyone. I am so thankful for all in Baptist Care SA who love and serve those in our care and community.



words by **Sue Raw**  
CEO, Baptist Care SA



# The Remarkable Florence Young



words by **Andrew Turner**  
Director, Crossover Australia

Recently at a gathering of Baptist leaders from around the Pacific, I was privileged to meet Eric Maefonea and Thomas Weape, leaders of the Baptist movement in the Solomon Islands (the South Seas Evangelical Church). They spoke of their movement of over 600 churches, and 100,000 members. One in seven Solomon Islanders is a SSEC member. 'But did you know how we got started?' asked Eric.

In 1882, Florence Young was 25 years old and still a relatively new Christian. Invited to visit her brothers, who'd bought a sugarcane plantation in Bundaberg, she was ready to set off from Sydney when a couple of friends offered to pray for her. They all knelt together, and after her friends had prayed, she went to stand up. 'Why don't you pray, too?' they asked.

This was not something she was confident to do. In fact, quite the opposite. She desperately tried to put words together, but nothing would come out, and after a couple of agonisingly awkward minutes, one friend finished for her. She journeyed north feeling acutely embarrassed, but also unable to shake off of one her friend's prayers - asking God to make her a blessing to everyone she saw on the plantation.

On arriving, she saw a housekeeper with four young children and decided they must be her mission field. She offered to teach them Bible stories - and even managed to pray in front of them! But she realised that she also saw 80 indentured Melanesian labourers, rough, uneducated, without English, and most of all, without the gospel. Should she offer to help them too?

To her surprise, ten showed up to her first lesson, where she used a chrysalis as an object lesson to describe the transformation God brings. It took weeks to get beyond 'God - so - loved' in her Bible lesson. But already more and more workers were attending, some returning to learn every evening. Gradually friends and connections joined in the work, which spread to other plantations and towns.

When the Federal Government eventually outlawed such overseas labour schemes, over 2,000 workers had been baptised and taught the Bible essentials! But would they keep their faith upon returning to the Solomons? To find out, she bought a boat, didn't she? And to her delight she found that the faith was not merely being kept, but shared. Churches and mission stations multiplied - 179 by her last visit - despite the very

serious dangers of disease, shipwreck and cannibalism.

It's a great story, worth reading in more detail. I've not even mentioned Ms Young's two stints in China and one nervous breakdown. But I love how powerfully God works through even the weak and shy - especially through them - when they pay attention to the sacred agent's assignment to be a blessing to all they see. And to really seeing!

Who do you see?

For more Sacred Agents head to [crossover.org.au/encouragement/sacred-agents](https://crossover.org.au/encouragement/sacred-agents)



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Through an annual grants program, we support charitable organisations working to bring lasting change to young South Australians in need.

Your donation will contribute to achieving our vision for communities where all young South Australians reach their full potential.

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