

# FOLLOW ME

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PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

GBC

ISSUE 6



## A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

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These are exciting times at GBC. There's a buzz about May Mission Month; both the projects and the discussion around the social justice topics that we heard about each week. As this newsletter goes to print we are still awaiting the final total but I am anticipating a generous response as God continues to work in and through us. This partnership with God and with each other to participate in God's plans and activity in the world is our grand calling as followers of Jesus here at GBC.

As a leadership we are working on our strategic plan for the next five years and, while it's still in draft form, I am excited about where we believe God is inviting us to participate with Him. One of the key decisions we need to make is what to do with our old facilities which has tremendous strategic

implications. You can read more about our Capital Works plan on the centre spread.

And as you'll also read in this newsletter, there is plenty more to celebrate in ministries across GBC. God is at work as we follow Jesus. This is our fundamental discipline and the heart of our invitation to those around us. We are learning what it means to love and follow Him as individuals and as a community which is an amazing adventure. We are partners in this great adventure and I trust that you will be deeply encouraged by what you read in the following pages.

**God bless,  
Marc**



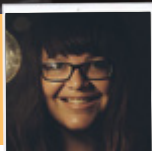
# SERVICES

We are immersed in, and influenced by a culture that rewards ambition and celebrates those who can attract a following. Not only that, media and marketing encourage vanity and urge us to be avid consumers. It's in considering our societal context that it becomes obvious...Sunday gatherings of God's people are an exciting act of cultural mutiny.

As we seek truth and meaning through weekly teaching we lean in to something much bigger than ourselves and acknowledge our dependence on a faithful God. We give our tithes and offerings, choosing to free ourselves from financial fear and to trust God's provision. We engage in singing our worship, not because we are musical but because God deserves our praise. The very act of getting out of bed each Sunday for something other than sport suggests we are an abnormal people.

Like every good uprising, our prayer and hope is to grow, to influence, to affect change in our community. We have been focussing on what it means to follow Jesus. Knowing that we are invited to follow Him, before we come to belief, should not only encourage us in our own journey but also be a reminder to invite our wider community to join us here to explore faith. We want to take seriously the charge to invite everyone to follow Jesus, not just to increase His following but because we know his power to transform lives.

We follow and serve the creator of the universe, the healer of broken lives and the author of our salvation. So, dear counter-cultural revolutionaries, won't you join us in bringing a shout of praise and a trustworthy presence that resounds throughout our community?



## *Steph's story*

Growing up in West Africa, church was a colourful, moving mass of bodies. The congregation danced and clapped their way up and down the aisles of our dirt floor church. It didn't matter if you knew the words; you just lifted your own praise to God and knew He heard your song. I always knew I was made for this, to worship God and

use my voice for Him.

I've been leading worship at GyMEA for 10 years but we only moved to the morning service after our daughter was born in 2014. This year, we felt God was telling us to dig deeper and He would be our living water. We decided to say yes to any music

needs at GyMEA and, as a result, have had the privilege of seeing our church worship in many different contexts and across many different generations. What an encouragement it has been to join with so many voices singing God's praise! We all worship in such different ways but if we lift our song to Him, we know He hears us.



## YOUTH & FAMILIES

Our children's ministry seeks to be more than a Sunday morning program, but an avenue that engages our kids with the culture of our church and community. One way we have seen this take place is throughout May Mission Month. Each Sunday in May, the projects have brought their own teams specifically to engage our kids with the vision of May Mission Month and the church. It has been so encouraging to see God inspire our children to rally behind these organisations and the work they are doing.

Our youth ministry also continues to be a space where we see the work of God unfolding. Earlier this year, we saw a record breaking 52 young people attend our

annual youth camp! This was a significant time for our youth to come together in prayer and worship and turn their eyes towards the Kingdom of God and their place within it. It is clear that God has already equipped our young people and is releasing them to be His hands and feet.

Finally, it was with great excitement that we recently launched our Young Adults ministry. Over five weeks, we were able to come together in community and share in the discussion of how to live out a life of faith. There is no doubt that God is preparing the heart and minds of our young people in order that they might speak His message into the world around them.



### *Michael's story*

Hi, I'm Michael and I'm 17, sitting my HSC at Engadine High School and I'm a Junior Leader at Kidzone. I started coming to Kidzone when I was 9, and when I reached Year 8, I moved into a leadership role.

I was inspired by my leaders when I was young, so when

I was older, I wanted to give something back. Through serving in kids ministry I've appreciated the leadership skills I've gained, including team work, character development, commitment, Christ-centred values and thinking about what's important in life. My leadership has led to growth

and service outside Kidzone too - I've just completed my Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, and I'm a volunteer at Crusader Sailing Camp. Kids having fun and learning about Jesus is so important, and I hope to be an inspiration to some of our kids so they want to lead in the future.



# CARE, CONNECT AND GROWING

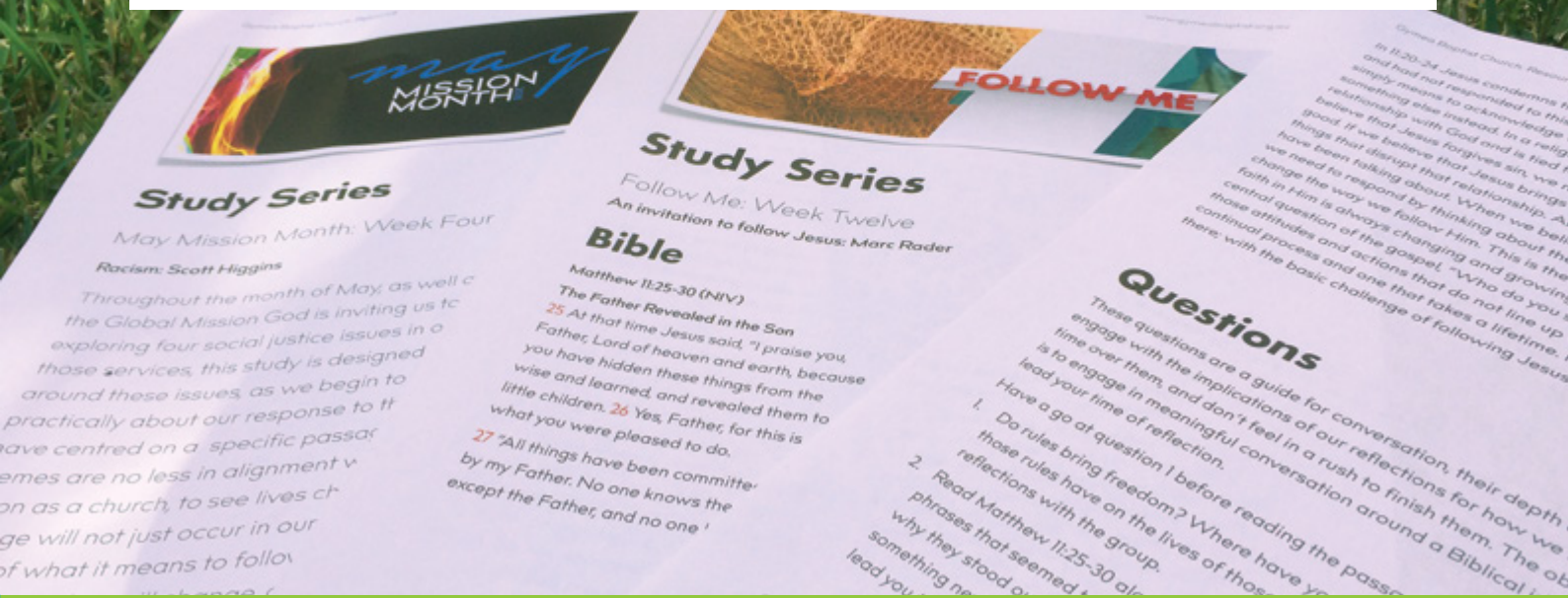
Momentum is really beginning to build in the areas of our church where we seek to care, connect and grow. There is much to be excited about.

Over the last few months, our GBC Cares team has visited people in retirement villages, cleaned a home, organised lifts, supplied meals, and supported a young mum by providing an extra pair of hands at dinner and bed time. This care is provided faithfully and willingly by individuals joining in with God's plans. One of those individuals is Sheena Hind, our GBC Cares coordinator and you can read more about her reason for serving below.

Our Life Groups continue to grow as centres for care and discipleship within the wider community of the church. Many of these groups have grown

both spiritually and numerically as they've engaged with the studies accompanying both our Follow Me series and social justice issues explored during May Mission Month. The second half of 2018 will also see a renewed focus on LifeGroups as we continue to work towards seeing lives changed by Jesus, and we're looking forward to gathering all LifeGroup leaders together in early June.

Our GBC Connect team continues to faithfully welcome and serve our community on a Sunday. A number of new people have begun to connect by meeting a team member at our brand new Connect Point. There are still plenty of places to get involved, in particular if you're keen on helping us improve our hospitality, check out the Section Leader role description on the serve page of GBC Links.



## Sheena's story

My volunteering started around five or so years ago from a feeling of disconnection, apathy about attending church or knowing many people. I was also hearing people around me complaining too, and decided to do something about it.

I volunteered for the lighting and

vision team despite not knowing much. It didn't take long to get the hang of it and as I met new people and got to know familiar faces I started to love coming to church again. People were encouraging or would speak about what they saw as my gifts and skills. Next I knew I was applying for the role of GBC Cares Coordinator.

While at times I've felt daunted, I've been strengthened by the encouragement and support of my team leaders. I am excited to be part of the cultural change in our church as we use our gifts, skills, time and resources to grow the church and invite others to follow Jesus.



# CAPITAL WORKS

In November of 2009 the new auditorium and lounge spaces were completed. The decision to build then was based on a strategic concern to reach more people with the good news of Jesus. We were simply running out of room and the original facilities, themselves built out of a strategic concern to reach the community, were no longer adequate. The new facilities have been an absolute blessing and have enabled ministry in ways that our old facilities simply were unable to. At the time, there were plans for a second stage of building works: to put a sub-floor through the old auditorium for additional youth space (and some other changes to make this more feasible). These plans were put

on the shelf while we focused on paying off the new development. Now, ten years later, the time has come to make a new strategic decision. The initial decision to be made is whether we will refurbish the original buildings or redevelop them, and this will be made at our mid-year meeting to be held on Sunday July 1 at 12:30 pm. The decision on a concrete plan, along with the financial commitment this entails, will follow after this. I am hopeful that we will be able to make this second decision at the end of this year or early in 2019.

The bigger issue, however, is the 'why' that sits behind this decision. Ultimately, any development must be







## *To finish what we started*

driven by a concern for the vision and mission that God has called us to participate in: to see lives changed by Jesus as we invite everyone to follow Him. And times have changed. How we reach a community that is suspicious of, hostile towards, or ambivalent to religion is different to how the church did so in the past. The well-worn metaphor of bridge-building is still apt, but requires a slightly new twist. In the past we have spoken of bridges from the community into the church, but in our day and age we need to build bridges from the church into the community; ways in which the church can serve the community as a first step. This is a subtle, but important shift, and will have implications

for our facilities. A facility that builds a bridge to the community considers the needs of the community in its design. This will be our biggest challenge; to remember that facilities enable ministry and mission rather than increase our comfort. New buildings for the sake of new buildings is not what the congregation of GBC in the 60s was after when they built the original auditorium and Christian Education building. It was not what the congregation of the early 2000s were after when they built the new auditorium. It is not what we are after in our redevelopment either. The plans may look different but the mission remains the same: to see lives changed by Jesus.



If you have not yet read the paper outlining the rationale for the redevelopment you can download a copy at [GBC Links](#) on the home page or request a copy from the church office.

Photos: Ramon Williams

# LOCAL MISSION - JESUS THE GAME CHANGER

We joined in with the national church campaign of Jesus the Game Changer that was promoted by the Baptist Association of NSW/ACT and Olive Tree Media. It provided a great opportunity to explore how the life and teaching of Jesus changed the world and why it matters. Throughout the five-week series we explored the topics of who Jesus is, women, leadership, care and forgiveness.

Across the series, we had over 200 people attend, which always kicked off with great food, conversation and vibe that was created by our wonderful team of volunteers. Small group discussion around tables was key to bringing an intimate atmosphere where people could reflect on the content of each video episode, share their

experiences, stories and perspectives of faith.

As we saw through our 'Follow Me' series, anyone can begin to follow Jesus. He makes no demands of faith or behaviour to begin to follow Him. As we begin to follow Him, His teachings inevitably provoke a crisis of decision which will cause us to decide what we believe about Jesus. And for those who are not yet ready to make a decision about Jesus, the next faithful step may be to continue to follow Him and learn what this means.

Either way, as a community of faith, we are committed to walking alongside people, cultivating faith where we find it. If the harvest is not ready, we will not try to make it happen, but trust that Jesus is at work.



## *Jane & Karl's story*

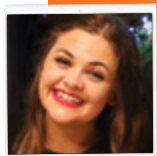
After producing the Jesus the Game Changer series, we had the opportunity to launch a national church campaign. Over 200 churches participated representing every state and territory across Australia in many denominations. Churches participated by running the series in midweek groups as well as Sunday services and

children's program. One church in Brisbane had over 1000 people participating in their midweek groups alone! A highlight of the campaign was the Jesus the Game Changer song written and performed by Colin Buchanan and filmed with some of the GBC kids.

We were blown away by the impact particularly of the episode on

Forgiveness. This episode points to the most 'game-changing' thing that Jesus did - His death in place of ours, but also shows the importance of forgiveness in our relationships. We received some beautiful stories of restored relationships in families and work places. Pray for the many churches that are yet to run the campaign later this year and beyond.





## Kait's story

As a part of Catalyst, I was lucky to be able to take part in a three-week series on Domestic Violence (DV) led by Carolyn Cousins. I initially joined the Catalyst group because I was passionate about seeing Jesus' work in action. After learning more about DV and just how deeply it affects our community, I saw the power we have as Christians to offer love and compassion in this space. But more importantly, it has spurred me to pray for the 1 in 3 women that have experienced Domestic Violence. To pray for the children that live in chaotic, violent homes each day; and even to pray for the perpetrators, because we have a mighty God that can transform the hardest of hearts. While change can be a slow process, I am so excited to see how God uses our church to help our community.



## GLOBAL MISSION

Hey, hey! What a fantastic May Mission Month we had and thanks to all who contributed in so many ways to its success. As part of our expression of loving our local and global neighbours, every year we raise funds to support a range of projects that seek to make a difference in the lives of those in need. Historically, as a church and denomination we have valued supporting mission that facilitates life transformation and we continue that legacy today.

Over the past 10 years we have raised over \$2.2million for more than 35 organisations. Global mission reflects God's heart for all people and as we walk with other nations, it stretches faith and helps shape our discipleship journey. With global culture shifting, our GBC Missions Department is also working

towards developing a theology of mission and development, which will guide the future of how we engage in local and overseas mission.

We also began our ongoing conversations around Domestic Violence (DV) and Ethical Consumerism as a community. We launched our new GBC resource card for DV plus the 2018 Ethical Fashion Guide. These are complex issues we will continue to unpack regarding how we think, what we believe and how we respond as followers of Jesus. While 'social justice' can be a catch-all buzz word that is ascribed to many things, we see it as a movement towards a socially just world in light of Jesus's great love, care and justice towards us – and His encouragement to go and do likewise for others.





# SOUTHERN COMMUNITY WELFARE

Southern Community Welfare (often referred to as Southern) is a service that helps those in the community in need. Whether that's in relation to parenting, building resilience, overcoming trauma, mental health, domestic violence, addiction or homelessness, we are here to help people navigate the stresses of life, to help people overcome challenges and to bring hope and healing.

Southern is also very excited to have completed its strategic plan – "flourishing communities." This plan will

be shared more broadly at our Inaugural Fundraising Celebration Dinner. The plan is an amazing journey that we believe God has been taking us on. If you would like to hear more about how God is leading this organisation, then we would love you to join us for dinner, on Wednesday 6th June at Gynea Tradies from 6:30pm. Bookings are essential [ASAP please], and can be made on [www.trybooking.com/VHYL](http://www.trybooking.com/VHYL) or call the SCW office on 9545 0299.

We would love to see you there.

## *Sally's story*

Imagine what it's like to live in the same house as your husband, but weeks pass without him acknowledging your presence. Imagine how it feels to arrive home excited that he's brought dinner and arranged a movie night, only to realise you're not invited. It's a time just for him and your child, and you are excluded, isolated in your own home. Imagine the stress of being expected to cover the cost of the family's food and living expenses with your minimal part-time wage and having to justify your inability to meet this unrealistic expectation. These

are just a couple of examples of the emotional, financial and sometimes physical abuse Sally and her child have endured for over 15 years.

Domestic and Family Violence is a complex issue and comes in many different forms. Sally found herself financially stuck, she was partially responsible for their mortgage and other bills but money was withheld from her and unrealistic expectations placed upon her wage. She was overwhelmed by depression and low self-worth, resulting from the years of abuse. Her GP referred her to SCW

and through the Case Management program, she has been able to establish support and achieve some financial independence.

Sally and her child decided to leave the family home a few months ago and now have accommodation through a housing and support program. It's a new start for them, but also the beginning of a long and tough journey towards healing and self-sustainability. In reference to her new place, Sally commented recently: "it's my sanctuary, I love being able to relax and enjoy the peace."



# FINANCES

As a church we value generosity. While this is reflected in every aspect of our lives – our abilities, our belongings, and our time – we also value generosity in our financial resources. May Mission Month has become an opportunity to grow in generosity as we support four projects that will change lives locally and abroad, as well as the ongoing work of our sent missionaries. This giving is over and above our regular offerings, but is another way that seeks to contribute to our vision of seeing lives changed by Jesus.

What is important to remember, however, is that it is not just 'their' lives that need to be changed, but our own. As followers of Jesus we are continually undergoing the transforming work of the Holy Spirit and, like every area of Jesus' work, we are invited to participate. Stewardship of our finances with the kingdom of God in mind, is one way that we participate with the Spirit to be transformed into truly generous people.

The outcome of generosity in partnership with God is true transformation; of our lives as we are set free from the greed, insecurity, and self-centredness that so easily entangles us in our consumer culture, and of those whose lives are touched by the work that our giving enables.

By the time this is published, the deadline for contributions to our May Mission Month projects will be only a few days away, but the opportunity to participate in the vision of changed lives continues. As we approach EOFY, can I encourage you to prayerfully consider again how God is inviting you to give to the vision of GBC and the transformation of lives.

We encourage people to give regularly to the vision of GBC as an expression of their commitment to this vision. Electronic giving is an excellent and simple way to give regularly and consistently.

**Bank:** Baptist Financial Services  
**Account:** GyMEA Baptist Church  
**BSB No:** 704 922  
**Account No:** 100 006 024







GBC

[gymeabaptist.org.au](http://gymeabaptist.org.au)