

fellow workers

NEWS FROM AROUND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VICTORIA
A PUBLICATION OF THE PCV STATE NEWS COMMITTEE

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contribute

Your contributions to *fellow workers* are welcome! *fellow workers* is now published every quarter (March, June, September & December). All copy and enquiries should be sent to the editor (contact details above). The deadline for contributions to the next issue is **10th February 2009**. Photographs should be digital and sent by email if possible.

diary of a first year, suburban pastor

On the 1st of January, I took up an exit appointment at Aspendale Presbyterian Church, and on the 18th of April was ordained as minister at the parish of Aspendale-Seaford. The following is a diary of a working week in August. It was not a typical week, since I did not need to prepare a new sermon to preach for Sunday, but there was still plenty to do...

Tuesday: After having Monday as my day off, I begin the day with Bible reading and prayer. I read a few verses of my Hebrew Bible _ I'm going through Zephaniah _ and then pray through a list of members of the congregation. I have a church directory divided into six sections for daily prayer, along with a few other prayer points. Then I read a portion of a book that deals with a number of issues of biblical interpretation. Today I'm reading about how the New Testament writers use and interpret the Old Testament.

Then I have a meeting with a member of another church who will preach for me while I go on holidays next month. We spend some time talking about the passage, and the thrust of the chapter (2 Timothy 4), and ways of forming a sermon outline. After this, I have Hebrew club at the Presbyterian Theological College, where we are slowly going through 1 Samuel. I spend some time afterwards chatting to people, before a dinner engagement.

Wednesday: I start the day again in Zephaniah, praying for the congregation, and reading. I also pick up another book _ I like to read several books at once _ about the connection between doctrine and liturgy.

I'm not preaching this Sunday, but I read the passage that is being preached,

and chose some appropriate hymns, which I phone through to our organist. I then prepare for Bible study tonight. My last task for the morning is writing my monthly report, in preparation for tomorrow afternoon's Session meeting.

In the afternoon, I visit a member of the congregation. It's a helpful visit, and we talk freely concerning issues of the church and of Christian discipleship. When I come home, I'm feeling a bit flat. I try to do some work on the weekly bulletin, but end up taking things easy until dinner. I share a pizza with a member of my Bible study group, and then we look at Mark 10:17-34. We're a small group, but talkative. We've been working our way through Mark's gospel, and I've been blessed by the insights of the group members.

Thursday: I spend some time in reading and prayer. This time alone with God is vital for me, particularly if I have a busy day. I take the train into the city for a Code Committee meeting, most of which is concerned with preparation for the PCV's General Assembly in October. From there it's straight to a Session meeting, which is an encouraging time. We cover a lot of ground, and discuss some great ideas for future activities. Aspendale-Seaford is blessed with enthusiastic elders. The meeting ends at 5:30pm, and I knock off for the day.

Friday: After a time of reading and prayer, I finish off work on the weekly bulletin. There are a lot of announcements this week, and I also include a list of daily prayer points. It's sometimes a challenge thinking up fresh prayer points, but it's a profitable exercise.

Our church prayer meeting is at 11am, and from there I go to visit my

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mentor, Nello Barbieri, with whom I meet on a weekly basis. He's been a great blessing to me in helping me think both strategically and relationally. His emphasis on training and equipping others is having a significant impact on my ministry here.

In the afternoon, I work on preparation for tomorrow morning's preaching workshop. Three elders of the congregation are preaching for me when I am on holidays, and I have been leading them through some seminars on preaching. Tomorrow morning is the third and final session, and we will cover illustration and application. This is one of the weaker areas in my preaching, so it feels strange running a workshop on the topic. I'm hoping it will benefit me as well. Finally, I have another dinner engagement in the evening.

Saturday: The preaching workshop runs from 8am to 10am, and I'm really encouraged by the elders' input. I don't do my daily Bible reading and prayer until I get home. Not ideal, but 8am is early for me. I'm not able to do much for the rest of the day _ I've done a fair bit this week, and I need to be fresh for tomorrow. All I do in the afternoon is peruse my sermon for tomorrow night. It's one I've preached before, on Luke 14:7-24.

Sunday: This is always a busy day for me, as it is for most ministers. Although I am not preaching this morning, I still lead the services. We have a service at Aspendale at 9am, followed by morning tea and a prayer meeting, and then it's straight off to Seaford for an 11:15am service. Suraj Chellaiah is preaching as part of College Thanksgiving, and he preaches different sermons to the two congregations. Both are a great blessing to me. He preaches on Daniel 6 at Aspendale, and I love the way he draws practical application from key statements in the narrative. Besides, it's great to have a chance to listen to a sermon! I don't normally listen to sermons online, though perhaps this is something I might start doing.

In the afternoon, I make a visit, read over tonight's sermon, and choose the hymns for the 6pm service. Lately, we've been having a question time after the sermon, and we have a stimulating time of discussion, with many different people participating. I'm encouraged by this, and tired but happy at the end of the day. The evening service is followed by supper, and I'm home just after 7:30pm.

So life as a minister is exciting. No doubt there are many challenges ahead, but I love my ministry, and I love seeing the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts and lives of congregational members. Please pray for us, and for God to use us to bring people into his Kingdom.

THE REV JOHN DEKKER

news from around the church

dedication of the grace presbyterian church, ballarat west.

After a long period of building, preparation and planning the Presbytery of Ballarat met on the afternoon of the 7th of September to dedicate the new church building, with grateful thanks and praise to Almighty God.

Previously the Church congregation met in rented premises since its inauguration some eighteen years ago. It's founding Pastor was the Rev John Stasse, now the Minister at South Yarra, and the clerk gave thanks to God for Mr. Stasse's long and faithful leadership. Although the parish is currently vacant, it is warmly led on a half time basis by Pastor Norm Sharp.

The land on which the new church is situated was provided by the sale of property of a deceased congregation from within the bounds of the Parish of Ballarat. The cost of the new building has been largely provided by a grant from the General Assembly's Ministry Development Committee and Presbytery thanks the Assembly for its generosity. Both Convener and Director of the Ministry Development Committee were present at the service of dedication.

The building was dedicated by the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Rev Robert Benn, who also preached the occasional sermon. His text was based on Joshua's Memorial Stones, of the importance of teaching the children biblical traditions, and in doing so Mr. Benn warmly thanked his wife Laurel and their children for their support in his Ministry, especially as Moderator General.

The Service was led by the Moderator of Presbytery Mr. George Smith and Elders from Grace, Neville Kerr and Jeff Hardy read the scriptures. The interim moderator, Rev Ian Hutton led prayers for the Church and the World.

The afternoon concluded with the sharing together of a superb afternoon tea. About one hundred people were present, including some fifty visitors. The Presbytery is grateful to Mr. and Mrs Benn for also ministering at Ballarat South and Ballarat North on that same day. To God alone be the Praise and Glory.

THE REV JOHN S. WOODWARD
CLERK, PRESBYTERY OF BALLARAT

'worship that is Christ centred'

On Saturday the 6th of September 2008, the Presbytery of Ballarat invited the Moderator General, the Rt Rev Robert Benn to hold a seminar at Ebenezer St. John's Presbyterian Church Ballarat. It was a wonderful occasion to see so many representatives from the Presbytery of Ballarat and the Presbytery of Geelong.

Mr. George Smith, the Moderator of the Presbytery extended a warm welcome to all, and especially Robert and Laurel, and then gave a heart-warming devotion on the Lord's Prayer.

'Exam questions' were given out by Mr. Benn before he gave his seminar on the subject 'Ministry to Muslims'. 'Well I thought we were here to learn', someone said softly.' Anyway, it was most enlightening to go through the questions first and then having the answers given during the power-point presentation. Laurel helped to read the Koran citations in English. Robert is a very talented man and as well as his great gift in communication, he is fluent in Indonesian.

After morning tea, the session was on 'Worship that is Christ-centred'. Robert redirected us back to the Directory for the Public Worship of God as found in the Westminster Standards, and encouraged us to be creative in our approach to leading our people to the throne of God.

An interactive session for lay preachers and an update on the Moderator's travels in Scotland were given after lunch.

It was a very valuable, fruitful, and enjoyable day. The highly creative and interactive presentations certainly kept everyone involved throughout the day.

A special thanks to the women of Ebenezer St. John's who did a superb job in catering for the morning and afternoon tea and lunch.

THE REV K HUI LIM
PUBLICITY OFFICER, PRESBYTERY OF
BALLARAT

four baptisms, four new professions of faith and a new elder, bendigo ablaze!

Mr Matthew Norman Munn was inducted onto the Session of St John's in Bendigo on the 7th of September 2008. Matthew was ordained and

inducted as an elder in the Albury Presbyterian Church where he served before moving to Bendigo due a change in his employment. Matthew and his wife Allison and children Chris and Nicola (Josh studying in Sydney) have been worshipping at St John's for quite some time now and we thank God for his provision of a not just an experienced Elder to serve on the small Session but also bringing a new family into the St John's community. In combination with our Quarterly Communion Service and the Induction Service we were also blessed with four baptisms, as well as four other people who made a profession of faith on the same day. This was truly a great day in the life and work of the church at St John's. All praise to our great God who blesses us in abundance by providing all our needs.

MR GRAHAM COWCHER
SESSION CLERK, ST. JOHN'S
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BENDIGO

alive and well at st. george's geelong

St. George's Geelong is proving that a vacant parish is not synonymous with a dying parish. At St. George's we are enjoying the blessing of God in a number of different ways and what follows are some of those blessings:

- The Very Rev Dr Allan Harman has been appointed Interim Moderator and is overseeing much activity.
- We are led in worship by the Rev Peter Wilding, now recovering from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Peter also conducts a weekly Bible Study, and the current series is called, 'The Beginnings of the Christian Church,' based on the Acts of the Apostles. The next series is to be studies on the Psalms.
- Two visits from the Rev Michael Ngaiyaye, a student from Malawi at the PTC, inspired the congregation to work towards raising money for a motor cycle. A grant of \$500 from the Presbytery of Geelong was used to launch the Appeal which now stands at \$4,000. A recent Presbytery Rally at St. George's, at which the Rev John Wilson and the Rev Michael Ngaiyaye spoke of their trip to Malawi, was a wonderful opportunity to support the appeal: the offering was \$1,170, a significant boost to the funds.
- As the Manse built in 1865 is vacant, an Open Day was held to enable members of the congregation and also the people of Geelong to wander through this National Trust - Heritage listed building. A Sausage Sizzle helped warm our visitors and encourage generous donations to the

Motorcycle Appeal.

- Two more functions have been held and by the end of the year we want to have that motorcycle on the Malawi roads.

On Sunday the 5th of October at 2.30 p.m. Music in Worship illustrated how music has been influenced and used in Christian worship through the centuries. A specially formed choir presented various types of singing used in churches throughout the years.

An afternoon of music with the Geelong Handball Choir and associated artists took place on Sunday, the 2nd of November at 2.30 p.m. Elder Mrs. Rosemary McCoy arranged both of these functions.

- The St. Georgian is the brainchild and work of three members of the congregation. It is a colourful four page paper circulated particularly to the frail and elderly who cannot attend church regularly, who are hospitalised or in Elderly Care facilities. News of the parish, Bible based puzzles, notes from a recent sermon and, of course, a few humorous items are featured in what we hope will be a means of regular contact with the 'shut-ins'.
- In 2010 we celebrate 150 years of worship. Plans are being made to ensure that the occasion is a memorable one in which we thank God for our heritage and for the faithful witness of generations of Presbyterians in our Church.

MS DOROTHY MCNAIR
SESSION CLERK, ST. GEORGE'S
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GEELONG

hamilton presbyterian church blessed with a new elder

Sunday the 7th of September 2008, was an important day in the life of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hamilton as the members of the congregation were joined in worship by several visitors for the ordination and induction of Trevor Handreck to the Eldership of the congregation. We are thankful to God for providing an additional elder to strengthen the Session at St Andrew's and to assist in shepherding the flock. We pray for God's blessing on Trevor in the days ahead as he seeks to serve the Lord and this congregation in the office of elder.

MR DON MCFARLANE
SESSION CLERK, HAMILTON PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

fun, food, & friendship

Friday the 31st of October was

the night that the youth of three Presbyterian churches: Hume, Surrey Hills and Essendon, came together to have some fun, hear some music, eat some food and get to know each other.

Hume pressie church hosted the evening and their band performed some lively music and provided the supper. Surrey Hills organised the activities and games. Andrew Vines gave an inspiring, and topical talk titled 'A Good Investment'.

He encouraged the youth to use their talents for God's purposes. One of the objectives of the evening (which was achieved) was to encourage our youth to bring along friends who don't normally go to church. The night was considered a success as up to sixty young people came together and enjoyed the evening. We look forward to having more combined events next year as we seek to encourage our youth to make and renew Christian friendships.

MR TONY RUGGERI
ELDER, HUME PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

'taking God to the football?'

The Scots' Church Grand Final Service, held on the 24th of September proved to be another great success. The service has now become an important part of the calendar of events of Grand Final Week in Melbourne. The Rev Richard O'Brien conducted the service with the assistance of the Rev Paul Cameron, Chaplain of the Richmond Football Club, who preached on the theme 'Taking God to the Football?'

The prayer was lead by Rev Cameron Butler, Chaplain of the Melbourne Football Club and the New Testament lesson from Luke 10:1-11 was read by Jeremy Dover, Victorian Co-ordinator for Sports Chaplaincy Australia.

With music provided by Douglas Lawrence (organ) and David Farrands (trumpet) the congregation sang the two selected hymns: I will sing the wondrous story, and Thine be the Glory, with full voice.

In an intense sermon full of vigour and meaning The Rev Paul Cameron spoke of a God that is everywhere in our lives. At the football, where we work, in whatever we do, the Lord is there for us, he said. With this knowledge we can overcome adversity and show to others there is a way of meeting the challenges of life. Paul concluded his sermon by saying that God is where beautiful things happen.

Once again the hard working sausage sizzle team cooked hundreds of sausages for the public in Collins Street as a fund raiser for the church. It was a warm sunny day and a day

enjoyed by everyone who attended the service.

We look forward to next year where once again, with the support of the ministry team, the Session and congregation, the Grand Final Service will be held in September.

**MR ROBERT LOWE
ELDER, SCOT'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
MELBOURNE**

on Christ the solid rock we stand

Fellow Christians look back on the year 2008 with awe as history unfolds before our eyes. One encounters the local scene or personal involvement scenario on the one hand and observations of global, international conditions and state of play on the other.

On the 14th of September some of us visited Scots Presbyterian Church, Thoono, in the Presbytery of Benalla for its 125th Anniversary. Secretary Bruce Binnie of Benalla presbytery will give a full report (telephone number 03 5765 2285) for a later edition.

Baptised at Thoono as an infant in 1928, this writer grew up in those Great Depression years. Visiting Thoono again occasioned much nostalgia. Hot summer afternoons with sticky flies, clergymen in flowing gowns with perspiration on their faces, young farmers with fine tenor voices,

elderly Scottish supply preachers with amazing oratorical gifts that held some of us spellbound, patient Sunday school teachers year after year teaching us the shorter catechism, Bible stories and preparatory lessons for Sunday school exams, Dad's horse which could be viewed through the window, tied up under the peppercorn tree near the jinker, farmers standing around talking about bushfires, wheat and lamb prices, and of course, droughts and floods.

Built by our ancestors from the U.K, the church has been used by our sovereign Lord to nurture generations of his children and has sent a number of workers to mission fields. Some of these include Miss Mary Kelly who later married the Rev Noble Mackenzie of New Hebrides and Korea (whose daughters Dr Helen and Sister Cath founded Il Shin children's hospital in Korea), Annie Amery who worked with the United Aborigines' Mission in Western Australia, Joyce Young (nee Morris), who with her husband spent a life time in missionary endeavour in Western Australia and the Rev Ken Martin and Gill who served in Africa.

For the last fifty six years this writer has been attached to Sunshine Presbyterian Church. This was not primarily by personal choice since there was connection with another denomination, but the Spirit of God exercised strong leading to return to the Presbyterian Church. In the

early 1950's the dynamics and emphasis was different from today's environment. Appropriate change is always desirable but we can never claim to have fully reached our goals and we certainly ought not to veer from the spirit of the humility and servant attitude of our amazing Lord.

Sunshine church aspires to stand with other churches heeding the call of Church and Nation in a response to the thinking expressed in II Chronicles 7:14.

We have the opportunity now to stand on the solid rock which is Christ Jesus and plead for our world as did the prophets of old. Their God is our God. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

On a short visit to California in October we attended a mega-church with a membership of 20,000 people. The preacher emphasised that in view of all that goes on around us, all we can do is hold on to Christ and let him hold us. The next Sunday we attended a mini-church where the pastor strongly stated that all he could do was hang on to the Lord Jesus Christ who will never let him go.

As we approach another New Year let's all 'keep our heads' and come to grips with reality, the REALITY which is Christ Jesus.

**MRS ISABEL G. BELL
MEMBER: SUNSHINE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

a time of change

We are entering a period of transition and change in the ministry of PIM. God has blessed the ministry of Inland Mission remarkably over recent years with new patrols opening as well as the opportunities now being experienced in Darwin and Mount Magnet. However, there are some farewells to be made at the end of this year.

After almost four years of faithful service, Andrew & Kerri Purcell (together with John) will be leaving Charleville and heading to Brisbane where Andrew will commence his studies as a candidate of the PCQ. Andrew has served enthusiastically in the patrol area as well as in the Charleville parish. We wish Andrew every blessing as he moves into another sphere of ministry for our Lord.

David Rodgers has done an exceptional job patrolling North QLD for approx. four years. He has been very well supported by the St. Andrews' congregation in Townsville. However, David will be retiring at

the end of his appointment (early December).

This means that there are two more vacancies for full-time padres. In Charleville, we will be having an interim measure of some part-time patrol work early 2009. But if anyone is interested in serving God in the PIM, please contact the Superintendent or Convener.

In southwestern NSW, Mike Willsmore will be moving into full-time patrol work from May 2009. Mike firmly believes that the Lord is calling him to PIM in a full-time capacity, a sentiment fully endorsed by the PIM Committee. Since moving to Mildura almost five years ago, Mike has established many contacts within his patrol area, which in turn has presented many gospel opportunities. Please pray for Mike & the family as well as the Mildura parish as they make this transition.

We praise God that Bert Pierce has made a full recovery from his operation a few months ago. He and Penny have now moved to the recently

purchased manse at Mount Magnet (a day's drive from Perth). Having a base in the patrol area saves time and money. We are in discussions with AIM and APWM about placing workers in Mount Magnet and Meekatharra where PIM purchased the Churches vacated by the Anglican Diocese earlier this year. We are praying God will send workers to complement the PIM patrol ministry as well as providing a mutual support for gospel ministry in that remote part of the country.

Thank you to everyone who supports the work of the PIM. Without your faithful prayer and practical support, the ministry would not be able to go 'beyond the furthest fences'. Please continue to pray for more workers to be raised up in God's time. Pray that God will continue to sustain our padres and their families as they serve Him in the remote parts of this great land.

**THE REV MARK SMITH
SECRETARY, PRESBYTERIAN INLAND MISSION**

new beginnings, new pastors make their mark

great surprises!

'Your first year as a Presbyterian Minister.' If you had told me ten years ago that I would be writing this article, I would have found it a ridiculous statement. I was in a different church, I was a fulltime Nurse, and if Sandy and I were going into fulltime Christian Ministry, it was to be overseas. Well that's what I would have said, but God had other plans. Through a few years of study at PTC as private students we found that it was possible, indeed necessary, to consistently apply Scripture to all of life. This led us to join the loving church family at Croydon Hills where it soon became clear that I should candidate for ministry in the Presbyterian Church. God has honoured that conviction and I am now writing about my first year as a pastor. God gave us a love for the people at Woori Yallock before we arrived in January this year. This is evident because we wanted to be exited to Woori but knew almost nothing about the place or the people! But God had everything well in hand. We received a warm welcome from a group of people who obviously care deeply about each other. It has been a privilege to be included in that care and it has made getting to know people very easy. Apart from the 'normal' tasks of preaching each week, pastoral visitation and hosting people at the manse, I have enjoyed being involved in the weekly Kid's Club and encouraging the ministry gifts of a few parishioners. Sandy has been strengthening ties with the Primary School across the road by teaching CRE to a combined grade three and four class and other involvement. We are thankful to God for answering prayer, as expanding CRE to Grades five and six may be possible next year because of this contact. This appears to be the pre-eminent place for us to show Christ's love to the community of Woori Yallock because, in spite of one hundred years and both organizations moving, God has kept the church in close proximity to the school. Linked to this is the outreach being done by some of our women with a weekly playgroup. Up to twelve families with little or no church background come to an unashamedly Christian Playgroup... what a privilege! We continually pray for these contacts with the children and parents of our community; please pray with us. Lastly, I think it is unusual for a pastor's first year out to coincide with a major anniversary. But this is where

I found myself, being involved in the final preparations for the Centenary of Woori Yallock Presbyterian Church. As the latecomer, I acknowledge that the majority of the work was done before I arrived and I am grateful that it was done so well. It was certainly a time to 'praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that is to come.' All these combined to make my first year out a blessed one and I'm looking forward to many more.

**THE REV DEAN CARROLL
MINISTER, WOORI YALLOCK PARISH**

all things bright and beautiful

Bright and beautiful canola is a common sight at Skipton during springtime. It blankets the ground with breath-taking yellow colour. White woolly sheep idle away the hours by grazing, unlike the under-shepherd at Skipton/Lismore Parish who is constantly learning and seeking ways to minister to his flock and his community.

Soyoung and I are really enjoying our time in Country Victoria, and counting it a blessing to minister here. Our church members have been really supportive of our ministry and have embraced us graciously and generously into their fold. Out of the many things that I have been involved in, I would like to share about my CRE time at Skipton, Lismore and Derrinallum Primary Schools. I am blown-away by the openness and friendliness of the students. It is also a great opportunity for us to advertise our upcoming Movie and Games Nights, where many of the students attended to enjoy our good Christian movies, popcorn, cakes, biscuits and hot Milo! In August, the Rev Grant Lawry and Mr. Ian Hodge led a group of ten young adults and one child to spend one weekend at Skipton/Lismore. The Canterbury Presbyterian Ministry Team was very well received and involved in BBQs, singing, giving testimonies, and games. Grant also brought a very inspiring sermon to us. We are thankful for the Sister Church relationship and looking forward to their next visit. In our weekly bible study, we spent almost three months going through the Early Chapters of Genesis by the Rev Dr Greg Goswell. It was most enjoyable and reminded me of my student days at PTC. In our youth bible study group, we are going through 'The Inquirer's Handbook' by the Rev John Wilson. Well, we see our local community as

our parish, and we are trying to attend several different activities: Red Cross, Vision Australia, Schools, Photo Club, Historical Society, and the local hospital. On Anzac Day, I was invited to lead in prayer and songs together with the Catholic and Anglican Priests. It was a wonderful experience to serve the community in this manner. Soyoung and I have been using our daily stroll to visit our neighbours; inviting them to our upcoming activity, having a cuppa and giving them a listening ear. I have been privileged in conducting five funerals so far and am thankful for the opportunity to speak words of comfort to the family. It's also a special time for me because I get to speak to a great multitude of people. At the last funeral we had more than two hundred and fifty people in attendance. I am finding my first year out in Parish Ministry a wonderful growing experience for me as a Minister of the Gospel. Please pray that Soyoung and I will be faithful and diligent in the task that God has set for us in the Skipton/Lismore Parish.

**THE REV K. HUI LIM
MINISTER: SKIPTON/LISMORE PARISH**

encouraged and expecting in the future

I have been blessed by God in my first year as a pastor, especially in that I have been an Assistant Pastor to Gerald Vanderwert at Donvale Presbyterian Church. I had served there as a student minister for two years, and was very thankful to be appointed there from this year. Working and serving with Gerald has truly been a joy and privilege. God has been kind in placing me with such a colleague in ministry. Being an Assistant Pastor has also meant I haven't had all the responsibilities a pastor normally has upon his shoulders. I haven't yet conducted a funeral service nor chaired a session meeting. But I have been freed up to teach CRE, and to focus somewhat on regular mentoring of a number of younger people. God has burdened my heart with a desire to be used by him to train and help raise up future gospel workers. I am also meeting regularly with a couple of our elders. I've had the opportunity to lead a home group, and a couple of training courses _ I hope to increase the training focus at Donvale. But at the same time, a major challenge is to work towards focusing on people rather

than programs as the way to build the Kingdom in number and in maturity in Christ.

Being warmly welcomed into people's homes and lives has been humbling. I've really enjoyed preaching. Even though being an Assistant, preaching about five in every six weeks has been great. I am still maturing and growing as a preacher but have received much encouraging feedback from the congregation – praise be to God! I've also appreciated preaching evangelistically at one of our Caf_ Church nights, where people are invited to bring friends to hear the gospel clearly explained in a relaxed environment.

Our family of four (which is now five) moved to Vermont after Christmas – our new home with a flat backyard has been a blessing. Josiah, our eldest, has settled well into three year old kinder; Alexis can't wait to go herself. Micah was born in April – it's been a busy year. I have been disciplined in keeping my day off as a day with the family, trying to show in action that my family is my first church. Kirsti is kept busy caring for our children and the home. But she still helps with hospitality, some pastoral care and co-leads the church Play Group, which has a mix of church and non-church families involved. She's appreciated being in a congregation that hasn't weighed her down with their expectations as a minister's wife. By God's grace, we have received much encouragement in our ministry and we look forward with expectation to the years ahead in the service of God's people at Donvale.

**THE REV CLINTON LE PAGE
ASSISTANT MINISTER, DONVALE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

'time flies' when you are serving the Lord

My first year as a minister.' Has it been that long already? Well almost. Hmm . . . How do you sum up the first year in ministry? How do sum up any year in ministry for that matter? Not easily, I suspect. Nevertheless, we will have a go at it just the same. It is of course a year full of firsts, first morning 9.15 am, first call, it's the funeral director, first shock, and one week later, first funeral, first Australia Day address, first Communion, first baptism (as a minister of course), first ANZAC Day service, first Assembly, first interim-moderatorship, first Carols in the Park address and first wedding (Well... it will be in February, anyway), in short my first year has been a year full of opportunities. Many more opportunities than I thought possible; opportunities to meet with people in times of joy and times of sorrow,

opportunities to walk beside them in the shadow of death, to rejoice with them at the miracle of life, opportunities to get to know the community, to share a meal, and many opportunities to share the good news of God's salvation, and opportunities to love and be loved. In a word or two, my first year has been immensely rewarding. That is not to suggest that it had been without its challenges; challenges that walk up and hit you in the face, challenges that you know about, and challenges that sneak up and catch you completely unawares. Challenges that test your courage and boldness to proclaim God's word, challenges that stretch you physically, mentally and emotionally and challenges that put pressure on you as a family. Challenges that try you as an individual and your ability to keep your life in balance and challenges that test your reliance on God. And yet, challenges that can be met with joy (Sometimes it's not with all joy). Joy because the living God is at work testing, strengthening, and completing the work he began. Joy because the grace of God does equip the saints for works of service, joy because the word of God becomes a living reality in the lives of his people. Joy because the word of God gives sight to the blind, sets the prisoner free, brings hope to the hopeless, and revives the soul. Although there have been occasions for joy there have also been times of distress as you see people harden their hearts towards God. Knowing the word of God, they reject it, hearing the good news, they become angry and hostile. It is hard to watch people, good people and nice people, choosing their own destruction. My first year in ministry has been a year of ups and downs. I think on reflection that there have been more ups than downs. It is a unique and rare privilege to shepherd the flock of God, one that comes with unique challenges and rare rewards, AND I LOVE IT.

**THE REV KEVIN MAXWELL
MINISTER, ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH TATURA/RUSHWORTH**

a time of stretching and blessing

It was with a sense of excitement but also some nervousness that we embarked on our move to Drouin. Any nerves were quickly put at ease with the warm welcome expressed by the congregation, and as the year has gone on many friendships have been made. There were adjustments that had to be made as we moved to Drouin, but we thank God for the way in which he answered prayer and has provided all things including a warm-hearted congregation helping us settle in and

a caring school and kindergarten to settle the children into their new environments. Through the Church and school, they have each made friends quite quickly.

After the four years of study, the transition to parish ministry has been relatively smooth. Probably the biggest shock has been the number of funerals to conduct – sixteen in total so far this year. While challenging, this has been a tremendous opportunity for gospel work. The majority of the funerals have been for people who have had little or no connection with the Church. I have used these opportunities to speak publicly and also one-on-one about the hope we have in Christ. While this has not resulted in fruit for the parish (yet), I'm praying that God will use the words He gave me on those occasions. Coupled with this is the weekly preaching load of three services. While this has stretched me at times to fit in adequate preparation, God has enabled me to continue. I have enjoyed the opportunity to preach with such regularity; please pray that I will continue to rely on God's enabling as well as seeking to improve in this area as I feed God's people week by week. In all of this, the elders are seeing to it that I am not overextending myself. I believe that we are working well as a team; please pray that this continues as we seek to move forward. Our Children's & Youth Worker, Darryl Martin, has provided valuable assistance in helping me settle in. We meet regularly for prayer and to plan various aspects of the ministry, which has been of great encouragement as we work together for the gospel here in Drouin. One thing I'm finding is that while College has equipped me in the fundamentals of ministry, it is now that the real learning is taking place as I put into practice what I have learnt and apply the theory to real-life ministry situations. Ministry does have its challenges but they are always coupled with blessings as the Holy Spirit works through His people. I believe that the Drouin parish has great potential for growth in the years to come. The population of the town is expected to double in the next five to ten years. We need to be prepared to make contact with new people who are moving into this district. Even without that outside growth, there are still numerous opportunities to impact this area with the gospel. Please pray for us as we seek to build one another up in our faith and speak & show the love of Christ to those who do not yet personally know Him as their Saviour.

**THE REV MARK SMITH
MINISTER, SCOT'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
DROUIN**

a new record - pyv annual volleyball competition

On the 12th of July of this year, we had thirty-nine teams enter and take part in our annual Volleyball Day. This number was close to a record! There were twenty-five mixed and fourteen men's teams from nineteen different churches, including Fawkner Samoan Church for the very first time. The day began with a great talk by former Australian Olympic Volleyball Captain Sil Ruddle, which inspired us all.

The teams battled it out from 11:30 am until 4.00 pm, which was then followed with the finals. The teams from Fawkner won the mixed and men's competition. It was great to see our brothers and sisters from the Samoan church with us. Hopefully, it will not be the last!

All in all, it was a great day. There is no way that Pete and I could have done it without the help of Vinesy and Kirsty Watson on the day and Jeremy Dover, Shady and Russ Graham before the day.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve our Lord in this way. It was only by His grace and strength that we were able to pull through the chaos and have a smooth running day.

MATT WHEALEN.

girl's day out

The annual Girls Day Out was held at Canterbury Presbyterian Church hall on the 2nd of August. Approximately thirty-five girls/women attended, from a variety of churches, including a good number from Sunshine Presbyterian.

Michelle Humphreys spoke from the book of James on 'The Great Power of a Small Tongue' and from Hebrews on 'The Power of a Good Word'. These talks encouraged the girls not to underestimate the power of the tongue, and to seek wisdom from God. In the second talk, Michelle urged the girls to encourage others as long as it's today, and explained that encouragement is a few words spoken at the right time that helps someone to want to keep going as a Christian and to love God more, even when the going's tough. The girls were also encouraged to be good listeners and to continue to meet with other Christians.

Three consecutive workshops were run in the second half of the event: 'How can I know the will of God in my life' by Joan Van der Horn, 'Chick's Ministry' by Joy Venning, and 'Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall' (self-esteem and confidence) by Kathy James.

We'd love to see more women from around Victoria take the opportunity to come along to Girls Day Out _ or

if you live in a regional town, why not consider running a similar event in your local area. If you are interested in doing this and would like advice, please speak to one of the friendly PYV leaders or contact Ruth Ronalds (email: ruthbrad@optusnet.com.au).

RUTH RONALDS
PYV LEADER

upcoming pyv events

1. The leadership-training weekend will be held on the 29th and 30th of November for all those who are leading on Summer Camp 2008/09.
2. The biggest camp of the year, Summer Camp, is being held from the 27th of December to the 1st of January at Lady Northcote Campsite in Bacchus Marsh. This year will see the launch of the Foundations Internship, the new structure for PYV leadership training. Nello Barbieri (PCV's Training Officer) will be giving talks from Isaiah. For more details and to register online check out www.pyv.org.au

You are invited to

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2009 Commencement Service
Speaker: Rev Neil Chambers
Convener of the Theological Education Committee

Monday 16th February 8pm
Venue:
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146 Canterbury Road Canterbury

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a window seat to god's perspective

How do you feel about flying these days? Each week there seems to be additional reasons to feel less secure and more cautious about getting up in the air (the threat of hijack increasing and the possibility of crashing still real!). Despite this, a recent flight to Sydney and back reminded me that flying could be quite pleasant: the food was edible, the take off and landing were smooth, the legroom was ample, and I had a window seat! But what I enjoyed most about the flight was just being able to see everyday ordinary objects on the ground from a different perspective.

Being high up in the air also helped me see how the rivers run to the coast and how valleys and mountains all 'fit together' so perfectly. Then as we flew lower on descent into Sydney, I could easily pick out houses, garages, swimming pools, and eventually cars _ all of which were ant-size. From my window seat looking down on the world below, I was reminded of the verse, 'God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth and its people are like grasshoppers' (Isaiah 40:22).

What I saw from my vantage point may well have been substantial, but surely it was a whole lot less than what God sees everyday from His vantage point, which surely must include not only all of suburban Sydney at once, but also all the nations and peoples of the



earth! Proverbs 15:3 says, 'The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good'. What a view he must have! It's good to be reminded that the whole world is God's world and His concern is for the whole world! These days we are reminded often by a variety of sources that the people of the world make up one global village.

There was a time when whatever happened over on the other side of the world was inconsequential to the rest of the world, but now it appears that everything that happens affects everyone no matter where they live! And, of course, this has a bearing upon the task of the church in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Remember how Jesus sent out His disciples 'into all the world' (Matthew 28:18-20)? Think also how he instructed them to go into 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8). Think also how the book of Acts explores the spread of the gospel all the way to Rome by the end of the book (chapter twenty-eight), yet even when that was completed, their task was by no means finished. Even now, the situation remains a huge challenge.

While the world is seemingly getting smaller, it is also at the same time growing in number day by day, year by year. And even though we on the APWM, Victorian Committee are delighted and thrilled at the way

that God continues to send us willing servants whose desire is to serve him in faraway places, we can't afford to lose sight of the many, many millions who are still yet to hear! Surely, this is what the Lord Jesus had in mind when He said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.' Hopefully you won't have to wait for your next aeroplane flight to be reminded that we regularly need to attempt to see the world through God's eyes _ there's more to it than your backyard, there's a whole world out there and 'how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?' (Romans 10:14).

THE REV PHILIP BURNS
CONVENER, AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN
WORLD MISSIONS, VICTORIA

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'fully rely on God' – dayspring 2008

PWMU's Dayspring Day was held at the Donvale Presbyterian Church during the first week of school holidays. Seventy children, thirty-plus adults, and a number of babies attended. The theme for the day was F.R.O.G or Fully Rely on God. We had five adults dressed as missionaries from the past to encourage children to use their gifts and abilities in the Lord's service, despite their individual struggles. At the end of a game-filled, ice cream making day all of the children received a show bag, filled with 'missionaries from the past' cards, a calendar showing missionaries' birthdays, stickers and a few novelty toys. The aim of Dayspring is 'To encourage and be God's special missionaries'.

MRS JOAN MILNE
COUNCIL MEMBER: PWMU

thank you for the ministry of phil and glenda simmonds

The Rev Phil Simmonds has indicated that he is resigning from his position as Associate Director of APWM to take effect at the end of February 2009. For some time now, Phil and Glenda have increasingly felt the Lord's call to return to pastoral ministry. They have discussed this with National Director Bill Lutton and National Convener David Pilgrim, who with considerable sadness have concurred with their decision. The Church owes a great debt of gratitude to both Phil and Glenda for their unstinting service over their six years with APWM, with Phil firstly as Administrator and then as Associate Director, and Glenda's largely voluntary work in the office. They have both served beyond the call of duty. The development of the administration and office systems will be left in a healthy state. An advertisement for an Administrator to replace Phil is included in this issue.

We praise the Lord for Phil and Glenda's contributions over the last six years to our church's program in world mission, and pray for His leading in their future ministry and that, he will guide them to the parish of his choice.

DR DAVID PILGRIM, AM, FEDERAL CONVENER, APWM