



## The Messenger

March, 2009 - May, 2009, Issue 1.

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### From Pastor's Pen

I want to share a personal interest with you. I've gotten to enjoy plants to a greater extent in the past few years. Well, I should say I like herbs in particular and plants with an unusual 'story to tell.'

My latest purchase is a specimen of *Synsepalum dulcificum*, ☺ commonly called 'the Miracle Fruit Tree.' My research says it's been around in Australia commercially since the 1970's; but has not been well marketed to the general public.

What's so interesting about this pretty little plant is that it contains the chemical 'miraculin.' No, I'm not pulling your leg. The fruit, when chewed is not the most desirable tasting stuff you'll ever eat; but it has an amazing effect. Consumed, when fresh, the fruit is palatable; but if chewed and allowed to coat the tongue, the "miraculous" takes place. The effect on the tongue, which lasts up to two hours, is to alter your tastebuds so that everything you eat tastes sweet; and pleasantly so!

One of the classic examples of the effect is that people who want to test the benefit, first drink water and lemon juice in equal parts and find it tastes like good quality lemonade. Having been given confidence, they then proceed to eat the lemon itself without the slightest grimace or face. The raw lemon tastes like a perfectly ripened orange...and the experiments go on and on.

I happen to think that the plant is particularly well named; and that God had a hand in it. You see, the miraculin's benefit is experienced only after tasting and chewing for a minute or two. Faith is one of those issues we all need to chew on if we are to have confidence in where we stand in life and the life to come.

To the consumption of the plant itself:

- In dried form MFT fruit is said to taste like ashes. (I've only tried it fresh; but seeing videos of those who've eaten dried form can be hilarious.
- The faith to try produces a 'miracle' that occurs over a short but definite timeframe.
- The results are an unexpected sweetness from the sour/bitter things of life.
- Others can't believe our reactions and taste to see for themselves. When they see our acceptance of the reality that this experiment really works – they too want to step out and try.

In this Lenten and Easter season we are reminded by the points above that when we look at the work of Christ in His suffering, death and resurrection, many miracles took place and can be relied upon. What began as the taste of bitter ashes took on miraculous proportions that reach to all of humanity – past, present and future.

The results of Jesus' work are sweetness out of the sour/bitter experiences of life. When still others see that God gives us the strength to cope or find the sweet from amidst the bitter, they too are encouraged to "taste and see that the Lord is good;" to recognise that the Cross of Christ is the real and original "Miracle Fruit Tree."

**"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

1 Corinthians 1:18

*Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Greg.*

Pastor Greg Vangness

## National Church & Parish Matters

**What does one say to the people of Victoria or to those in far north Queensland and their families at this time?** I have avoided a devotion on this topic on the front page where you might have expected it. Ultimately, words in a short space cannot deal with the shock, pain or multiple list of hurts and questions from the depths of the soul adequately.

I encourage any who may need to deal with these issues to call and organise a time and place to meet with me or another pastoral person at any time in the future. It is important and valid that those, whose lives have been changed forever, have opportunity to grieve and reflect and draw on others for help as required.

The concerns of the nation for devastated lives is apparent in every level of our communities: Government, aide agencies, individuals. We cannot bring back family or property or lost joy of life; but we can direct to the one who truly has these issues in His care: our God. At this time I leave you with a message of comfort and hope from an unlikely source and ask you to consider all that this means for our own attitudes and reliance on Jesus who is with us in the midst of our despair, providing hope and assurance:

### **Message of condolence from Liberian refugees in Guinea, West Africa:**

*We have learned about the fires in Australia that killed more than 100 people. I want to tell you that we are mourning with you. We pray that the Lord will restore comfort to the bereaved people. It is heartbreaking to hear such news. We are not far from one another. We want to let you know that your worry and tears are our worry and tears. We are on our knees praying for you and your country.*

**Wilson K Vai  
for the Lutheran Refugee Community in  
Nzerekore, Guinea, West Africa  
11 February 2009**

This message of solidarity and condolence was received recently by August Fricke compiler of "Asia Focus" Newsletter for the victims of the catastrophic Victorian bushfires. It was sent by Liberian refugees, 7000 in number and still living in camps, people who have lost everything, lived with death and despair for 15 years or longer, have no advocate and are largely forgotten by

the international community receiving little or no help from anyone. They are the ones who remember us in our suffering.

Isn't it amazing to see the way that God reaches out through His people from corners of the globe and people with concerns of their own that might seem greater than our needs. We are part of a family which spans time and place. Praise God.

### **FORMER INTERN NOW A PASTOR!**

Our former Youth Intern: Adrian Kramer who was in the parish back in 2001 went from the parish to Australian Lutheran College and studied for the ministry. He was ordained to the public ministry last December and was recently installed in his first parish in Esperance, W.A. Please support him with your prayers as he begins this new phase of life in service.

### **Note to Young Adults in the parish:**

District want to bring to your attention the DCC resolution from late last year, encouraging you in your selection of delegates to the Convention of Synod;

***Resolved that as Congregations begin the process of electing delegates to Synod, increasing younger participation and nominating current office Bearers within congregations are encouraged.***

#### **Resolution 213:08**

As you prepare for the Convention of Synod and determining who your delegates will be could you please note this encouragement from DCC.

Serving Christ by serving you.

Trevor Ruthenberg  
LCAQD Executive Officer  
Office: (07) 3511 4015

Editors Note: Please contact Geoff Rossmann, Lee Zipf or Pastor Greg if you feel God is calling you to this task. It is a blessing to the wider church and the local parish to have representation at Synod. Synod is an excellent source of keeping up with what is going on in the church at many levels and in being informed we, as parish, have resources to draw on in our focus on local ministry.

## **LADIES FELLOWSHIP**

Our ladies are very busy for the start of the year. Rally Day at Bethania is a wonderful opportunity to meet other ladies of the Brisbane South & Gold Coast Zone. Special Guest is Maureen Hampel from Inverell. Maureen and members of the local Lutheran Church are raising funds to build an Early Childhood Centre for the disadvantaged children of the area. To do this the members run an Op shop. Just this week St. Peter's Alberton sent about 20 cartons of clothing, toys, books etc down to them to help in this wonderful opportunity.

Lutheran Women of Queensland Retreat is on 13-15 March and this is our once a year time of meeting old friends and making new ones – this year under the theme: A Walk in Their Shoes. Special Highlights will include bible studies led by Pastor Tim Jaensch and Pastor August Fricke, Special Guests speaking on the people of Nepal and a Nepalese supper, Highlights of mission in Asia in general, Out of the Shoe Box surprises, Share Our Sonshine, Momentous Moments, Pampered in the Presence of Christ, terrific food and fellowship and did I mention relaxation, rejuvenation and refreshment. If you don't come you are missing a wonderful opportunity....so we hope to see you there.

## **MENS FELLOWSHIP**

Shed Men has started off well with 63 males attending a wonderful evening at Peter Grants Fish Farm learning the ins and outs of this industry. A Wonderful Guest Speaker: Gordon Walker enthralled the guys in his life experiences. He dealt with the issue of Bi-polar Disorder and its devastating costs to the individual and community. He explained that medication and a God who provides understanding friends and caring facilitators are strengths that cannot be praised too highly. The food was appetizing; and fellowship was terrific.

## **PARISH PLAY GROUP**

Come along and join us on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month. We have a wonderful group of children who share in Indoor/Outdoor play times as well as language and music sessions. The mums also have time for a chat and everyone has a great time.



God in his time has allowed LORDS to take some positive leaps towards the start of the project.

After canvassing the various levels of Government we were fortunate to have our Federal Member Mr. Stuart Robert put in place a procedure for the promotion of LORDS speaking out to the general public through newspaper articles and together with Julie Bishop who was the Coalition minister for Education and presently shadow treasurer raised our situation on the floor of Federal Parliament. Further to this, a rally day was held on the site at Mirambeena Drive to voice affirmatively the communities need for the school. This was very successful and we thank the many people who attended.

Our thanks also are extended to the many who responded to the key issues paper of the Department of Infrastructure and planning. We have many people working towards this project and the school council wishes to thank you, the people who took the time to write to and email the Premier, Deputy Premier, various Government ministers and the GCCC Mayor and Councillors. Our thanks also are extended to those of you who signed the petition to state parliament and to those who put in submissions to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure as well.

We totally appreciate Councillor Donna Gates for her continuing support and for instrumenting the Gold Coast City Council submission to the Department of Infrastructure and Planning requesting that LORDS be allowed to be constructed on Regional Landscape and small lot rural land. It became apparent and was acted upon that the Development Application for a Material Change of Use be resubmitted to Council.

On 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 when the new Draft South East Qld Regional plan was released we were given hope through the Regulatory provisions.

Consequently the Development Application was withdrawn and relodged to be assessed under these provisions. At the same time the building

application was submitted for stage 1 and stage 2. Currently we are waiting for the reply for Information Requests from the various referral agencies.

The Provisional Accreditation granted by Non-State School Accreditation Board has been extended and an application will be submitted to the Block Grant Authority at the beginning of March.

If you are able to further assist and you have an account at the LLL we would appreciate you earmarking it for LORDS. This will cost you nothing but helps us immensely.

We are very grateful for the prayer support of all members and friends.

With thanks, LORDS School Council.

Ph Josh 55462223 or Dan 0438735452.

**Men's breakfast and ShedMen** (See Article in this issue for details of ShedMen) nights held monthly contact Lee Zipf 55466353

**Ladies Fellowship Group** and various **Bible Study Groups** contact Janette Keith 55462470.

## NEWS FROM ST. PETER'S, ALBERTON

### Parish EXPLORERS CLUB/GOD'S GIRLS

We continue to meet on a Friday afternoon from 4:15 to 5.30 p.m. We begin with afternoon tea and the joy of creating our own snacks. We have a group time of singing and introductory activities, then divide into two groups for our bible story and craft activities and come together again for games. All Welcome

**"There is no situation so chaotic that God cannot, from that situation, create something that is surpassingly good. He did it at the creation. He did it at the Cross. He is doing it today."** Handley C G Moule.

### PARISH REGISTER – Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths

Baptisms-	Born	Baptized
Truloff, Taite Ethan Jay	20/12/06	09/11/2008
Truloff, Chase Parker	16/10/08	09/11/2008
Holani, Kailani Lavinia Patricia	12/12/07	13/12/2008
Chambers, Andrea Fee	15/12/08	25/01/2009
Box, Letisha Jane	07/11/08	25/01/2009

Deaths-	Born	Died
Theilen, Lincoln Johan	10/01/2009	12/02/2009

#### Parish Pastor

Rev. Greg Vangness  
Tel.: (07) 3287 2084 Mob.: 0409 898 646  
E-mail : pastor@albertonparish.org.au

#### Parish Chairman

Mr. David Huth Tel.: (07) 5546-2279

#### St. Peters Lutheran Church, Alberton

185 Alberton Rd, Alberton  
Contact: Mr. Geoff Rossmann Tel.: (07) 5546 2131

#### Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Woongoolba

Cnr. Mill Rd. & Staplyton  
Jacobs Well Rd., Woongoolba  
Contact : Mr. Lee Zipf Tel.: (07) 5546 6353

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT BETHLEHEM, WOONGOOLBA

"A doing church - a doing people"

"Did you know our Church was doing so much?"

If you require more information about any of these small groups please see the leaders or contact Pastor Greg for more details.

Young children: **Parish Playgroup** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays contact Kay Kleinschmidt 5546 1525

This group is mainly for Children aged 0 – 4 and their carers: mums, dads, grandparents etc. The emphasis is on the casual get-together. The group meets at St. Peter's Hall, Alberton from 9:30 am until people need to go.

**Bethlehem Pre-school & Kindy:** Enrolments welcome. Phone Sheena on 55462246.

**Sunday Kids:** Every Sunday morning 9.00 – 10.00 a.m. This is the Sunday School at Bethlehem Congregation. It meets each Sunday during school terms and breaks for Holidays.  
Ph Christine 55461879

#### Parish Junior Youth Group (A-Team)

- For grades 6,7 & 8 meeting monthly.  
Enquires Ph Laura 0403136 058.

**Parish Youth Group** meet twice monthly this year. Phone Fiona 55462644 and get onto our e-mail or mailing list.

#### Young Adults Bible Study Groups

# Lutheran Holiday Program 2009

## - NEW AND IMPROVED

This year our program is moving to the second week of the June School Holidays which will make the dates from Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> of July until Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. Another huge change will be from 2 ½ days to 5 x ½ days – the program will run each day from 9 am til 1pm. This will mean that we won't be providing lunch, but instead we will have a substantial morning tea break. I am hoping that the shorter days will make each session mean more to each of our students instead learning 2 themes in one day, each day will have 1 theme on which we can concentrate. Other churches that run this program run on a 5 day system and we also give it a go.

Each family who attended the program last year was sent a letter in November advising of the two major changes. I invited feedback, positive or negative, however didn't receive any at all.

The theme this year is SonWorld Adventure Park. Each day the students will learn that life is about making choices, just like making choices at a Theme Park (i .e. which ride will I go on?) and that will determine what sort of day we have. But the big and little choices we make every day will determine what kind of lives we'll have, our relationships with those around us, and ultimately our relationship with God. And all that begins with our understanding of who is Jesus, and how will we choose to respond to him? At LHP our kids will meet various people who encountered Jesus and discover how they responded to Him. They include a blind man, ten men with leprosy, a paralysed man, a rich young ruler and the disciple Thomas.

At SonWorld Adventure Park, there's no height requirement, the lines are short and everyone gets a good view of the parade. But hold onto your hat and glasses, because it's sure to be a life-changing ride!

We really need some extra help this year in these few months of preparation. I have listed below jobs that will need filling this year, if you are able to help please contact me directly.

- Helpers (year 8 and upwards)
- Publicity Co-ordinator
- Missions Leader
- Leaders for Kindy & Primary Groups
- BBQ Co-Ordinator
- Sound and Vision Co-ordinator
- Treasurer/Finance Co-ordinator
- Set-up & pull down Co-ordinator

All helpers over the age of 18 years must have a Blue Card – this is everyone. Please see Pastor Greg if you don't have one or don't have one that is current.

This program is in its nineteenth year and generally the same leaders have been working and running it the whole time. We'd love some extra help and your children would love you to come and participate too. You don't have to take on running a whole group, but just being there is a huge help to our teachers.... Please consider it prayerfully.

If you attended the program as a student in the past 19 years, please consider coming back to help us too....

I can be contacted by email at [jennikeith@bigpond.com.au](mailto:jennikeith@bigpond.com.au) or at night on 5546 2223 or during the day on 0408 184 044 (I'll ring you back if I'm unavailable).

Blessings

Jenni Keith