

January 2021 News & Notes

Last Call for Philip Island Camp July 2-8 2021

I don't know that I need to say a whole lot about camp at this point, other than if you haven't registered and you intend to... well, now is the time! Please go to www.newchurch.net.au to express your interest and/or book in your spot. If you're not sure whether or not you want to go, and perhaps need some encouragement I would suggest you take a look at True Christian Religion #765. While I'm paraphrasing, it basically says that the more time you spend at church camps, the higher heaven you'll go to. And trust me, you definitely want to go to a higher heaven. So sign up to come to camp, you'll have a good time there and in the hereafter!

Spiritual Growth Program: Living Courageously

Every year we run a spiritual growth program in February-March that leads us into Easter. These programs have been popular as they are really down to earth in a practical way by taking the teachings from the Word and putting them into practice. This year's program is titled, "Living Courageously." Here's a quick overview of the program:

Living Courageously is a seven week program designed to assist you in applying God's teachings to your everyday life. This program explores the Elijah story of the Old Testament, an ancient tale of heroism and adventure. Again and again, Elijah stands against evil when his downfall seems certain – and yet again and again, the Lord pulls him through and helps him re-establish the worship of Jehovah in Israel. Elijah's story is our own. His strengths are ours, and so are his weaknesses. Each time the Lord gives Elijah a miracle, it tells of a miracle He performs in our lives, allowing us to turn from selfishness and find the courage to transform our spiritual lives and prepare for heaven.

- Week 1: Becoming aware: identify your motives
- Week 2: Serving God first: practice genuine kindness
- Week 3: Finding new truth: seek inspiration – pray
- Week 4: Making a choice: determine your higher purpose and live it with passion
- Week 5: Finding courage: listen for the still, small voice
- Week 6: Convicted by conscience: flex your spiritual muscle
- Week 7: Living courageously: go forward living courageously with strength and purpose

If you'd like to join in, I'd appreciate if you'd send me an email (todd@hurstvillenewchurch.com) in advance because I need to get the workbooks put together for everybody, so I just need to know how many workbooks we're going to need. Thanks

Women's Weekend

There have been a few women's weekends the last couple of years, two "live" and one via Zoom, and we're looking to see if there is interest in another one in the March or April timeframe. If you'd like to be part of the conversation as to which weekend it is going to happen, send Jenn an email (jenn@beiswenger.net).

Kogarah Storehouse Donations



Last year we made a change to our Kogarah Storehouse donations in that we did our drive in advance of Christmas so that they would be able to give out the goods to people for Christmas. As usual these items were very gratefully received, and perhaps even more so this year. I've written before about how with all the COVID stuff happening that there have been more people this year having a tough go of it, so the KSA has been dealing with an increased demand on their services this year.

The only downside to taking donations before Christmas is that there are some people who are unable to participate in the drive, and to those I would suggest that you are still more than welcome to bring in a non-perishable donation anytime. You can just drop it at the office door, so you don't even have to come to church! We'll make sure it gets to those who need it.

Final Thoughts

Crazy year, right? I can't count the number of memes I've seen on Facebook indicating a readiness to scrap 2020 to the rubbish bin of history. It's been a tough year for a lot of people.

In this country we've been blessed in that the disruption has been more along the lines of financial pain, and less along the lines of health issues. No matter how the virus has impacted your life, I think it has highlighted just how valuable faith in the Lord and the afterlife is.

The Lord promises that He's ever mindful of what is going on in the world. This virus hasn't caught Him by surprise. He's willing to let it disrupt our lives, but with it we hopefully can see a reshuffling of priorities... maybe more time spent with our immediate family, and a realization that the time spent with them is more important than the money earned or trips taken. Ultimately we can relax, because even if we're not sure how exactly this mess will get cleaned up, we can rest assured that the Creator is on the job inspiring those who are able to do the job required.

Things looked pretty bleak at the time of the Lord's birth, and yet He found a way to perform a miracle to save us all. While the situation is different, He's still the same God who as the Scriptures remind us, "is ever mindful of His covenant" (Psalm 111:5).

Like Moses, Joshua, Job, and many others, one day we'll be able to tell the story of how the Lord led us through this crazy time, how He provided an unexpected solution, and how we're better off for having had this challenging, strengthening experience. We just had to be patient. So hang in there, this virus didn't come to stay, it came to pass. Have a great 2021!

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).