



## **The New Church Newsletter**

**Hurstville Society October 2021**

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by Rev Todd Beiswenger

## These Are Exciting Times!

By Rev Todd Beiswenger

A few weeks ago I was watching an interview with Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla. The main reason for the interview was to talk about the new “Gigafactory” that was opening in Berlin. It looks like a good deal for both Tesla and Germany, bringing both economic benefits as well as helping accelerate Europe’s transition from petrol burning cars to cleaner electrics. However, as seems to always be the case these days, there’s always somebody who wanted to find fault with the deal. The reporter asked Musk, “The critics say that this plant is harvesting water from the region.”

Musk laughed. He literally broke out laughing. He said, “This region has so much water. Look around. There’s water everywhere here. Does this place look like a desert to you? It’s ridiculous.”

The great irony in this interaction is that Musk had literally just finished saying, “I hope this factory here can serve as an inspiration to the people in Germany and throughout Europe for excitement about the future. I mean, we’ve got to be excited about the future! We’ve got to do things that make us want to live. You know, it cannot always be about the problems every day. I mean, do you want to wake up every morning and everything is just a problem? What inspires you and what makes you excited about the future?”

And with that he gets, “The critics say...” No wonder he laughed. He just made this great plea for excitement about the future and that not everything can be about problems and what does he get hit with... clearly the reporter missed the point.

I think Musk actually makes a great point here, and it is something we really ought to take to heart. Believe it or not, there actually are a lot of exciting things happening in the world right now. Despite what the news wants you to believe, there are more things happening in the world other than COVID and Afghanistan. As you might guess, I would cite the electric car revolution that is about to take place as one such story that we should be excited about. I don’t know how much you’ve paid attention to this story, but electrics offer the kind of performance that was up until now only available to those who owned Ferraris, Lamborghinis and the like, and they do it while being more energy efficient and cheaper to manufacture, which means cheaper for you to buy.

It’s not just environmentalists and rev heads who should be excited about the future. Global conspiracy theorists should be pumped too. Why? Well in my experience most conspiracy theories start with blaming the evil bankers that they say control the world. Even if you don’t buy that, how many of you have been frustrated dealing with banks? They have a lot of power! If you need money, they’re happy to charge you, but they sure don’t pay anything back if you “invest” in a savings account or term deposit. But the tables are about turn by way of a new decentralized finance system that is being built off of block chain technology. There’s too much to go into here, but suffice it to say it will allow you, me and everybody else to have the same power in the financial system as the banks and wealthy people. The financial hierarchy is about to be flattened.

There's also the amazing research being done on the use of psychedelics for treating all sorts of mental illnesses, with people describing it as "10 years of therapy in a single night." Not to mention the amazing advances being made in robotics, which are transforming the health care industry allowing for quicker, more accurate diagnosis and treatment. These are just a few! We live in exciting times!

The point of this little rant is that I think a positive attitude is spiritually important. No, it's more than that, it's vital! I know we didn't have the chance yet to hear Faith Green's NDE story, but one of the things she talks about is how the demons she encountered were repulsed by positive thinking. Their whole goal was to bring her down emotionally, destroy any hope she had for the future and curse God for the trouble she had in life. The Writings tell us the same thing about evil spirits and how they work. Negative thinking only comes from one place, and you can be assured that it isn't from heaven. Once we start feeling down, it is easy to get sucked into a spiral of negativity where we wonder how it is we can ever get out of it. Yet the cure is so simple. Think positive. Cast those demons out!

It reminds me of the story in the Gospels where a paralytic is by a healing pool, but when the angels come to stir the water somebody always gets in first. He gives his reasons to Jesus as to why he's still paralysed, and it seems reasonable that somebody who isn't paralysed would get in first... yet, that's completely rubbish. Jesus says, "Get up." Friends, that's a command to think positively. The paralytic instead of focusing on what he couldn't do should have been excited because Jesus was in town! Whether he was healed or not, the long awaited Messiah was here! Stuff is happening!

The Bible is absolutely full of positive thinking and promises that we're always on the cusp of something amazing happening. You're Joseph and in prison? You're about to get out! You're a slave in Egypt? Moses is on the way! In the desert? Have faith in God and the Holy Land is yours. Thinking negatively never accomplished anything in the Bible, and the same is true in real life. Our focus can't always be on the problems.

Is the world perfect? No. But it never will be either. If you're looking for something to complain about, there will always be something you can find. It's not hard to whinge. It takes no talent. However, if that's what you're participating in, well, I hate to say it, but you're doing the enemy's work. On the flip side the Lord's kingdom is a kingdom of uses, where things get done, where things are happening. Things are definitely happening in the world today, amazing things that were only the stuff of science fiction not that long ago. There will be growing pains as we integrate all of this into the world, but it is going to be absolutely amazing to watch it all unfold. I hope you can find something to be excited about, because we really do live in exciting times.

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## **Guest Preacher**

I was about to call this a “pulpit swap,” but the reality is that there is no swapping. I’ve been engaging in some friendly banter with my friend **Rev Howard Thompson**, basically giving him a hard time about the fact that he’s not doing live streamed services in Roseville. So to prove he hasn’t lost his ability to actually give a Sunday service he has taken up my challenge to preach here on **Sunday October 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

I’ll handle the live stream set up and operation so to you everything will be as usual. But if you want a change of pace from my services, tune in on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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## **Regional Clergy Meetings**

Among the many things that have been disrupted by COVID are the annual General Church clergy meetings. The 2020 meetings were completely cancelled and the 2021 meetings that were originally planned for Bryn Athyn were changed to regional meetings due to ongoing travel restrictions. As usual, I’m considered part of the Asian group. They’ve been delaying these meetings to try to get as many people as they can to them, and at this point the plan is for them to happen January 18-20 in Hawaii. In theory the Australian borders may be open by then for international travel. I’m still a bit concerned if they will require a two week quarantine though upon re-entry. There is still a lot of uncertainty at this point, but there is a scenario where the stars all align just right and that trip is able to happen. It will be a tough assignment, but somebody has to do it!

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## **Flash Food Collection, 2021 Edition**

As Sydney lockdown 2.0 wore on, it seemed like a good time to remember our own blessings – that our biggest problem should be restrictions on our movement, for example – and pitch in to help those for whom it's a bigger deal, those who are really having a hard time making ends meet and getting food on the table.

As part of our modified Sunday School program, Zach & Jenn bundled up reusable grocery bags (the kind that so many home deliveries are coming in, or that we reach for at the checkout when we realise that we've forgotten our bags at home!) with a friendly flyer and distributed them to neighbours in the immediate vicinity of the church, and also advertised on the church's Facebook page and the tennis court notice board. Folks were invited to fill their bag (“and more, if so moved!”) with non-perishable food and toiletry items, and drop it off at Baringa or leave it at the end of their driveway for collection on an assigned day, or to make a financial contribution through the church's website, for us to shop on their behalf. Then, we waited..... and watched as the filled bags and monetary donations rolled in!!

*The response was tremendous. . . . .*



Jenn click-and-collected two big orders from two big stores with the gifted funds, and on Sunday, September 5th, she and Zach made the rounds again to pick up any bags left out for collection. A couple of days later they delivered it all to our local food pantry, Kogarah Storehouse, but not before weighing it all up, out of curiosity.

Can you guess how much food & toiletries were collected? *More than 175kg worth!!* It was so impressive, definitely our best collection yet. Thank you so very much to everyone who contributed in one way or another. There is no doubt that your generosity has really had a wonderful impact on a handful of community members struggling to get by.

**Thank you!!**

## New Signage

About two years ago we had the wooden sign at the front of the church run over by a truck. This started off a process to replace it, but the opportunity was taken to not just replace it but to rethink what it is that would be best to have out front. Well, as projects tend to do, the scope of this project expanded to include new signs for the gardens behind Baringa as well. The old signage was getting, well... old, and so replacing it at the same time made sense.

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It seems crazy that all of this started nearly two years ago, but at the same time the project was given the “go ahead” just before the first COVID lock down, and once the lock down hit everything was put on hold. Since then **Margaret Heldon** has put a lot of time into pouring over the details, getting the artwork right, as well as consulting with others on the wording and overall design.

On Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> of September all these new signs finally arrived. They all look good, though the printers did make one error. The main sign was supposed to be double sided, but what we received was only single sided. They’ll replace that soon enough, and in the meantime installation can begin. That will certainly be a project in itself, but we’re closer now to having a sign out front than any other time in the past two years!



A fun thing to do: Hold your phone camera over the QR code and open the Church Website

*Postscript.* Many of our readers will remember Norman Heldon who worked tirelessly to make the church gardens a place of beauty as well as somewhere to meditate on God’s creation. It was Norm’s idea to incorporate small signs throughout the church garden for our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2005. Visitors could read about how everything in a garden corresponds to our feelings and thoughts. In April 2018 Norm, aged 100, passed into the spiritual world. Since then plans have been progressing into restoring the church gardens to honour his vision. Landscapers did a make-over of garden edges, paths and added some new plants in November 2019. The final stage will be the new signs. These are printed from computer files onto aluminium and expand on the originals. Thanks **Todd** for your expert help with the wording. **Nature Tourism Services** have worked closely with us

giving valued advice, designing the layout and creating attractive colour illustrations to go with the text. I believe Norm would approve!

Margaret Heldon

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### **Working Bee...**

We were meant to have our quarterly working bee in mid-July, the first Sunday of the new school term. Those plans, along with so many others, these days, were laid waste with the lockdown. We'd like to reschedule it, but it's virtually impossible to plan, anymore, with the uncertainty of pandemic flare-ups. What we *can* say is that we'll keep an eye on the state of affairs and let locals know, if we're permitted to do something before the next newsletter comes out! But also many thanks to those of you who have come over and given some time to weeding. People do notice!

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### **Birthdays**

Happy Birthday to **Stuart Heldon** (10<sup>th</sup>), **Zach Beiswenger** (10<sup>th</sup>), **Murray Heldon** (13<sup>th</sup>), **Darren Kermond** (20<sup>th</sup>), **Cameron Walsh** (20<sup>th</sup>), **Jenn Beiswenger** (27<sup>th</sup>)

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