



Baptist Union
of Victoria

TOGETHER

Our stories together ♦ Quarterly magazine

Issue 7 March 2024

Featuring

EASTER DEVOTIONS Diversity
Summer Wrap Ups **STORIES**
RESOURCES events **PRAYER**

WELCOME

Welcome to our March 2024 issue of TOGETHER – stories from around our Victorian Baptist Union.

I'm not sure about you, but this year has certainly started with a bang here at the BUV Support Hub. There are so many good stories and initiatives happening throughout our Union that are exciting and fill me with anticipation about what this year will bring.

This year at the BUV Support Hub, we have a theme for the year of 'Being and Sharing the Good News' and as I read the stories in this issue of our magazine from across our Victorian Baptist family, I can't help but be impressed with the way we are doing this already. These stories represent only a trickle of the hundreds of stories happening every day across our state and I think we are in a wonderful position to be impacting our communities throughout Victoria.

Coming back to our theme for the year, the Good news we are talking about, of course, is based around the Easter story. Because of Jesus, Hope is restored and death has no sting, the grave has no victory; peace is possible – we can leave our anxieties at the foot of the cross; destiny is ours – we can live fulfilled lives on earth with the promise of eternal life; we can move beyond sin and guilt into transformed relationships with God and others; and we can be and share the good news to others – we can be the light to a broken world sharing Jesus' love with those around us.

Members of our Support Hub have written a 4-part Easter Devotion around the theme Because of Jesus which is included in this issue of TOGETHER which can be used as a personal or small group study guide with questions included for reflection or discussion. I really hope and pray this blesses you as you reflect on the fact that the greatest love ever known is available to you and I today through Jesus.

May you not only be inspired by these stories but may you also experience the deep and sacrificial love of our God this Easter, the intimate knowledge of his son Jesus who died for each one of us, and the assurance and guidance of the Holy Spirit who enables us to walk in step with our God each day.

God bless,
Daniel



Rev Daniel Bullock

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We would like to thank our BUV Editorial Consultant, Naomi Kollmorgen, for assisting with collating, interviewing and writing stories.



A Summer of Sharing God's Love

Hundreds of Baptists organised, led or attended various camps and missions around the state over the 2023-24 summer, such as Baptist Camping, Red Frogs, Scripture Union Family Mission (SUFM), Christian Youth Camps (CYC), and Theos. Here, we find out from just a handful of Baptist attendees about the fun, witnessing and Christian community they experienced this Summer.

BUSTLING BAPTIST CAMPS

Baptist Camping Victoria ran five Family Camps, five Roundups and one Swell youth camp across three of its four sites. BCV Acting Office Manager Kathryn Sanders said all camps were “bustling with life and energy” as 206 campers participated at Anglesea, and 382 ‘ranchers’ made their way to a Roundup at Mill Valley Ranch.

BCV Ministry Manager Fiona Simcoe said: “The passion of our staff and volunteers was a source of much joy as they sought to serve and be salt and light amongst our summer campers. Relationship is the cry of the human heart, with one another and ultimately with the Lord - our Creator, Father and Friend. Camps provided hundreds of opportunities for relationships to be forged. It was so richly evident that camps provide amazing opportunities for relationship and faith to grow.”

Summer family camps at Tynong and Anglesea

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... camps provide amazing opportunities for relationship and faith to grow

afforded families the time and space to dwell together, bond and make community. “Slowing down with family meant time to focus on one another’s needs, go to the beach, go for a bike ride, paddle on the river or even a surf. Worship sessions took various forms to ensure that all ages and stages were engaged. Kids ministry sessions included craft, games and bible-based teaching. Outdoor worship was a highlight for many. Campers felt more connected to community and to God through the experience.”

Almost half of the family campers have a history of more than five years at Camp Wilkin family camp – “The depth of knowing one another was evident through reunion hugs, deep conversation and games immediately commencing at fever pitch. It was so delightful to see the young adults that have shared their teen years at camp, still deeply connected and sharing life and encouragement together.”

Swell Summer Youth Camp brought together a tight group of teens who shared three big days of surfing together. The “chill” vibe gave room to be yourself, relax and connect. Fiona said: “Our leaders’ willingness to be vulnerable made room for deep conversations, and worship was low-key and authentic as the teens grew deeper in God throughout the camp. We were tremendously encouraged to hear, after the camp,

that two family members of a participant gave their lives to Jesus shortly after camp. The Swell camper had prayed for her family whilst on camp. We give thanks and all glory to God for the testimonies of his goodness through our ministry camps.” For future camp details visit baptistcamping.com.au



A COLOUR-IFIC TIME AT CYC

A group of youth leaders, along with Youth Pastor Riley McDowell from Essendon Baptist Community Church, joined the CYC leadership team at their Adanac camp in the Yarra Valley. Around 20 people from Essendon’s youth ministry also attended Adanac as campers. A Colour Run was one of the popular camp events this year, as pictured. Pastor for Families with Children, Sally Danger, said: “Leading together in a different context brought so much growth and joy to the team. CYC camps are an incredible experience for leadership, and are fantastic camps for young people to attend as they experience God’s love and Christian community.” For future camps, check out cycministries.org.au



GEELONG FROGGIES ON THE GO

Around 20 people from OneHope Baptist Church, Geelong, served with the Red Frogs over summer in a range of places – Torquay, Byron Bay, Gold Coast, Lorne, Bali and Fiji. Red Frogs supports young people during Schoolies Week across 14 locations with pancake cook-ups, emotional support, walking people home and handing out red-frog lollies, giving a positive peer presence in potentially dangerous situations.

OneHope Young Adults Pastor Robert Spicer said: “All locations experienced the important role of supporting, serving and safeguarding young people, and opportunities to put their faith in action.”

See redfrogs.com.au for details on future schoolies missions.



LOADS OF FUN AT TIDAL RIVER

People from Hawthorn West Baptist Church (HWBC), NewHope Baptist Church and others joined together to run Tidal River SUFM and Theos, including a carnival, hospitality, games, puppets, craft, bible drama and concerts.

HWBC leader Connie Janssen said: “The children’s program was creative and inclusive. Every afternoon, after our morning program and lunch, TRSUFM combined with the Theos team in the SUFM main marquee for a worship and story-sharing session. So good!”

The famous annual sandcastle competition drew contenders young and old. Some even brought buckets and rakes to build their sand masterpieces with this year’s theme, A Night at the Prom. “We had live music, advertised our program, told everyone why we do what we do and gave out prizes,” Connie said. On the last night the team had a worship session on the beach. For information on SUFM, Theos or KidsGames teams, see suvic.org.au





Prepare the Way

Christmas fills our hearts with joy as we think of gifts, lights and the holiday spirit. But Christmas means so much more, being about the birth of a saviour, Jesus Christ – and of course, His birth is only part of the story, it's also an incredible opportunity we have as the church to present Jesus, the hope of the world to our communities.

Last Christmas, New Life Baptist Church (Echuca Moama) recognised that people in their local community hungered to sing traditional carols more than songs about snowfalls and winter wonderlands. The team also recognised that in order to make a lasting impact, that it was not just about putting on an event, but more about activating the body of Christ to build connections and relationships with their neighbours, workmates and partnering businesses.

The theme for the 2023 carols was 'Prepare the Way'. Rather than ending the story at the baby in a manger, the hope was to present a very Jesus-centred program that was family oriented, fun, inviting and... wait for it... free! A huge financial stretch, but when you follow His leading, you can trust that He also looks after the details.

After six months of planning, building relationships with local businesses and food trucks, and co-ordinating more than 90% of the New Life Church community to volunteer in some way, the day arrived. On Saturday 9 December 2023 all systems were go. The weather changed from heat-wave conditions

to cool and windy. Perfect conditions for the 200 pinwheels given out to all the children, the giant bubbles provided by Twisted Science Echuca, and the children's petting zoo from Billabong Ranch. There were steady queues for the 760+ free sausages, the popcorn, fairy floss and snow cones. All of this was joyfully provided to bless the community which has not only struggled through Covid-19, but also the devastating floods of 2022. The anticipation was such that the hill at the Soundshell was full before the carols even began.

The carols program told the story of the nativity and pointed to the Jesus beyond the manger, that He came to prepare a way for salvation. The message was well received, and feedback continued throughout the weeks following. The carols musicians were from a number of the local churches all collaborating together with the one heart and spirit.

It was a phenomenal event that was well received by all who attended. We are thankful to God for the opportunity we have every Christmas to present Jesus to open hearts and pray that our new connections in the wider Echuca Moama community will grow and flourish.

A special thank you to the BUV Mission Catalyst team for supporting our vision with the humbling gift of a community grant to bless the community of Echuca Moama.

Sue Tanner, New Life Baptist Church

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and pray*



Christmas Creativity at Armadale

A Super Sunday Nativity Service, featuring a dance group, 30 fuzzy-felt kits, puppets and an onstage sandpit demonstration, was a highlight of Armadale Baptist Church's (ABC) Christmas celebrations last year.

The 120-year-old church has enjoyed sharing its recently updated buildings to serve its local community through the Arts, involving concerts, choirs and classes.

The Nativity service included musicians from Encounter Baptist Church and the Sole Purpose Dance Troupe from St Paul's Anglican Church, Caulfield. A young boy from the church's Mainly Music program helped Pastor Jude Waldron to illustrate what it looked like for mountains to be levelled and valleys filled using a bulldozer in the sandpit – including making all the noises!

One person who attended said the service "opened up [her] whole world", as it reminded everyone of God's love, comfort and good news that we can experience and share with the people around us.

Jude said the response from the 50 people who attended was very positive, and those organising the event were encouraged that: "This is why we pray

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before a service, not just so things go okay like the sound guy finding the button for the guitar to come through or people to remember their bit, but because we want the Holy Spirit to change lives.”

Around 70 people attended Armadale Baptist the following week for a Karaoke Carols night at which The Gospel Project choir performed, and Christmas food was served in a cafe-style environment. The church also held a service combined with NewHope Baptist Church, and a Christmas Day service focused on Psalm 98.

Pastor Jude Waldron said the Christmas season was a "fruitful time as a culmination of the encouragement the Armadale Baptist congregation received from other churches and the BUV".

"While Armadale Baptist has been continuing to reach their community in creative ways, the collaboration with other churches has encouraged the congregation and helped to see their strengths and become more energised in vision. This end to the year was a heart-felt celebration that God truly is with us."

Celebrating Cultural Diversity

There were smiles all round and plenty of audience participation at Donnybrook Community Church (DCC) and Olivine Community Group's first International Expo in January.

Around 90 people shared in the vibrant event, enjoying a banquet of delicious international foods, dance, music and poetry.

DCC Pastor Kathryn Jensen said many community groups collaborated in the expo, which was supported by a \$3000 Whittlesea Community Grant. "In the preparation and the running of the day, so many beautiful friendships were formed, and that's where the real fruit and value of this event was. Our team included people of Filipino, Aussie, and Indian cultural backgrounds – and they are the main cultures represented in our community here. It was really lovely to see, after months of planning, the friendships that have developed amongst different community groups here."

Kathryn said that honouring people of different cultures was a significant part of the event – for example, in the affectionate titles that she now shares with one of the team members.

"I've been meeting with one lady for a while and reading the Bible with her, and she has been drawing

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our aim was to bring the community together, and to build friendships that will be lasting ones


close to Jesus and started coming to church a few times. Her way of honouring me was to call me her 'guru' which means a spiritual teacher in her culture; and I call her Aunty, which is a term of respect in her culture. She'll say things like that in a public setting, even though she's older than me. Others looking on probably see this friendship, this beautiful interaction across generations. It's a lovely friendship that has developed as we organised the Expo. It was really important that we honoured one another during the event and in the planning.

"We've got so many nations here on our doorstep in Donnybrook. It used to be that you had to travel to the other side of the world to share with people of other cultures, but now you just have to step outside your front door. With the Expo, our aim was to bring the community together, and to build friendships that will be lasting ones."



Community response has been very positive and the team would love to organise future events. One attendee wrote on Facebook that through the Expo, she had found her “tribe” – “those I can walk with, sing with, share food and laughter with, pray with, etc, from amongst my multicultural neighbours”. She said Kathryn and the team were “ever-hospitable and vibrant”.





Stirring of Young People's Faith in Korumburra

Eighty young people are delving into matters of faith at a Youth Alpha course organised by volunteers from Korumburra Baptist Church (KBC) and 11 other churches in the nearby area.

During Term 1, an average of 40-50 young people attended each weekly session at a hall in Leongatha, with 39 attending the "Alpha Weekend" camp in March.

KBC Youth Alpha Administrator Kelly Brumley said it had been "very exciting seeing God at work in the lives of the youths."

"On the camp, the discussions went really deep and there was a lot of time for prayer and listening to God. It was amazing to see a group of Year 9, 10 and 11 boys spontaneously start praying for each other and the leaders. That was pretty special because it's not something the leaders suggested or started – we were a bit blown away! I've heard that at least one family has started coming to church through their young person attending. A couple of youths also accepted Bibles even though earlier they had felt that perhaps attending Alpha was just something their parents wanted them to do. So, we've definitely seen a softening of their hearts towards God."

The idea to run Alpha came after KBC started fortnightly youth group events, alternating with a church in Leongatha, which led to running a joint youth Bible study last year. Participants are between 12-18 years old from Korumburra, Leongatha, Inverloch, Foster and Wonthaggi. Some are from Christian backgrounds, but many are not. Hosts and helpers who lead the discussion tables are aged 18 to 80 years.

"With such a broad range of ages and stages volunteering, there is more life experience being shared and it has meant that the atmosphere has been a bit more reflective than you might expect at a youth event, although there's still plenty of fun and games. The youth get different perspectives to what they would hear if people were all around the same age. At the start, it was quiet because it took time for people to warm up, but over time they have really started to open up, engage with the material and have some interesting discussions. It's exciting to see how God has worked in the lives of the leaders too – one lady just started doing a youth ministry course because she discovered this was a passion and wanted to keep going."

With so many churches collaborating, an extra blessing has been the many fruitful partnerships built as churches contributed food, meal coordinators, roster facilitators, discussion leaders and prayer warriors.

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It's wonderful to be covered by an army of prayer volunteers. This is key to running Alpha. We had a prayer team in place early on who regularly receive updates on how everything is going. It's a lot of work to run a youth Alpha – there is a lot that needs to be done behind the scenes to make it possible.

The Alpha course will continue partway through Term 2.

Working at 'The Well'

Operating at a coworking space within a shopping centre, has prompted much curiosity and questioning from the ever-changing businesspeople surrounding Stephen Field of Canterbury Baptist Church (CBC).

Due to a future building program, CBC needed a new office space for Stephen, who is the church's sole pastor. This prompted the church to look into the Waterman Camberwell coworking site at Camberwell Junction.

The move took place in August, after much prayer and discussion at CBC on how the alternative office arrangement might suit the functions and values of the church.

Since moving to the site in Camberwell Place, he has found that "being in this space with 'church' written over your head" has fostered some beautiful relationships and allowed people to open discussions about issues that are on their hearts.

"I'm here to work, as everyone else is here to work. I answer my emails, I prepare sermons and other things here at my desk, but as I'm working, I'm also visible and available. I have made a point to never initiate a spiritual conversation – I feel quite strongly about that. But being here has sparked dozens of conversations with people who want to ask me things, or bring up things that are going on in their lives.

"For many people, I am the first pastor they've ever met face to face. They often ask, 'What does a pastor do?' Sometimes they share deeper things, and sometimes they initiate more reflective conversations, for example, 'If there's a God, why do bad things happen?' There are no easy answers, but more important than having all the answers is engaging with them and allowing them the opportunity to express the hurt and pain on their heart. There are some people who don't want spiritual conversations – some people I've known for eight months and we haven't had one spiritual conversation, and that's fine. I'm self-conscious about not being the soapbox guy."

Some of Stephen's new neighbouring coworkers hire a dedicated desk with their company's sign, others come and go using on-demand hotdesks, and some



Rev Stephen Field



Being visible, available and present, in this moment in history, is the way to do that. Then let whatever happens happen – and what happens, frankly, is extraordinary!

use a private office space with several staff members. He is able to use meeting rooms and sound-proof phone booths for private conversations, and there is a shared kitchen-dining area.

Stephen said the shared environment had been enjoyable since he would usually work alone – as he tells others in the share space, being a pastor often meant "to be with people who are having the worst day of their life", which can be taxing.

"In my job as a sole pastor it can be very isolating. I don't break confidences with people, but after spending time with people on their worst days, going back to a workplace where you see familiar faces and have a friendly chat – it's very refreshing, and better than just returning to a church building alone, which can be bad for your mental health. It's allowing connections for me and I've really appreciated it."

He said he was "super aware" that the church had lost a measure of respect, honour and credibility in the eyes of the public in recent years, causing people to see it through a "lens of abuse", and he sought to demonstrate God's love and message of hope to those he meets in this environment.



Nurturing Young Servant Hearts



The youth at Follow Baptist Church enjoy throwing their energy into helping others.

At least once a term, Follow Youth organise a “Service Night” where the young people can help out in their local community.

Youth Ministry Director Josiah Watson is constantly impressed by their willingness to participate in these events.

“We can talk about the fact that it’s important to help our community and serve as Jesus did, but so often it stays in the theory. We wanted to physically put our hands to work, to get on the ground and actually do things that make a difference to people. The response from our youth has been astonishing. People think young people would

not be engaged in this or they wouldn’t want to work hard, but they’ve actually been doing it with so much passion and excitement. They are always finishing one job and coming up to me to ask, ‘What can we do next?’ The response has been absolutely amazing. They’re excited to do this each term.”



My experience is that young people – contrary to popular belief – love doing things that are useful and make a difference to other people.

Follow runs a charity called the Follow Bless Collective, which provides services, programs, support and care to those who are undervalued, isolated and disadvantaged in the Cardinia Shire and surrounds. The youth often complete background tasks in support of the Bless Collective, such as unpacking delivery pallets, stacking shelves, or filling Bless Packs with food.

“We’ve been holding Service Nights for about a year now, and we’re constantly looking for different ways to serve the community. We have cooked for people in need, and written cards for people affected by the war in Ukraine to let them know we’re thinking about them and praying for them. We’ve also written cards for people in the local community at Christmas time.”

The Bless Collective manager often comes to speak to the youth about why Christians are called to serve others and the ways in which Jesus served, so they understand the biblical context behind the events.

“My experience is that young people – contrary to popular belief – love doing things that are useful and make a difference to other people. We have 25-30 kids at youth group on a given night, and they come with the attitude that they’re just going to jump in and help, all with

smiles on their faces and zero grumbling! They all love doing this together.”

“Tasks that would take the small Bless Collective staff two or three hours to do during the week, we can get done as a youth group in 15 minutes.



My encouragement to other churches is to provide opportunities for youth to practically step out. There can often seem so many reasons not to serve, but I firmly believe that the reasons to serve heavily outweigh the reasons not to. I think a lot of people would be pleasantly surprised by the response from their young people.

A Follow Baptist Church youth leader shares her encouraging story about recently becoming a Christian.

My name is Madi, and this is a short story of how I became a Christian.

I didn't grow up in a Christian household and didn't know who God was. I hadn't heard anything about God until one day, I saw a sign at my local high school advertising a breakfast club where volunteers from a local church (Follow Baptist Church) cooked and served pancakes for free. Through the people there, I began to hear small things about God, particularly during my rough times in Year 8. I found myself with the desire to know more about Jesus, so I went to their youth ministry (Follow Youth) one Friday night in 2018, and on Sunday, went to church. I didn't know what to expect, but I'm so glad I went, because ever since that day, my life has been changed. I have given my life to Jesus, I now go to two different youth groups, I regularly attend church, I've been on a number of mission trips and am now a youth leader at Follow Youth. After being prompted by God on one of the mission trips, I made the decision to get baptised in April last year.

I have witnessed the ways God has changed my life, and whilst I still face challenges in the day to day, I know God is always with me and He will never leave me.

Declaring their Love



Seven people shared their stories of faith and followed Jesus through the waters of baptism at an encouraging service at Kilsyth South Baptist Church in March.

Senior Pastor Rev Peter Nielsen said the service was a celebration of the action of God in people's lives, and as he said on the day, "The special thing about [baptism] is the obedience to step into the water, that step of faith that these seven people this morning are making. And something special happens between God and those who are obedient. They solidify their stance of faith. They declare their love for Jesus and they're submitting their lives afresh to Him... As we, as a community, celebrate the action of baptism, we celebrate the action of God."

Each candidate shared how their relationship with God had grown.

One lady spoke about gradually turning her back on God through difficult life struggles including a family death, illness, divorce, homelessness and substance abuse. She said her "spirit started to give up" and there was "something missing inside".

"Early last year I went to my uncle's church to see him do a sermon, and something changed in me that day. Seeing my family and their joy sparked something inside of me." Her faith grew through watching The Chosen series, reading right through the Bible, praying

and meeting friends at church – "My mind and heart started to change and I could feel my spirit inside start to rejoice... As you can see, Jesus has helped me and saved my life many times, and He's never forsaken me. So, I've decided today to give my life to Him and get baptised."

Another candidate met KSBC members through the church's coffee van, Two Sparrows. His faith grew after seeing a friend give his life to the Lord and get baptised, which prompted him to consider what part God played in his own life.

Other candidates shared about putting God first, relying on Him for strength through school studies, bullying and loneliness, and about developing a love for the God who cares for them and leads them through the toughest of times. One said: "I'm now able to look back on that terribly depressing and uncomfortable – just the worst year of my life – and realise that it was one of the best years of my life. By that I mean that what I found within my loneliness was a God who knows my every struggle and my every sin, and that Jesus will love me anyways."

The pastors and leaders prayed with each candidate and shared Bible verses that God had laid on their hearts as they celebrated this encouraging event together.



Peter and Sulari Nielson baptising one of the 7 candidates



Pastors roll up their sleeves to support the community

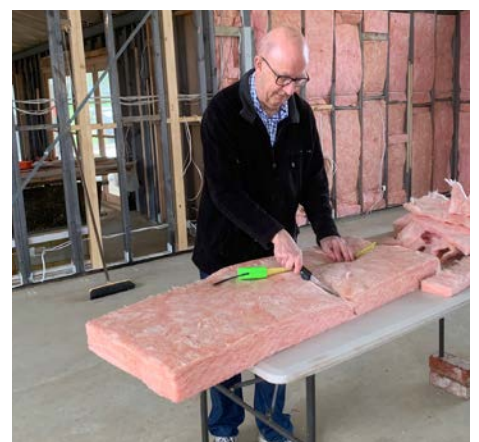
A few years ago, Graeme Semple, the BUV's Regional Pastor for the West, was visiting and connecting with the Community of the Transfiguration, (CT), the Baptist monastery in Teesdale, about 30 km west of Geelong. The Community had previously been in Breakwater, Geelong and were now building a village on about 24 acres of land at Teesdale. Already they had completed some of the residences, a welcome centre, the Oratory, the workshop, much of the gardens and their cemetery. They were now looking at working on the Community Centre. Graeme suggested that it would be great to get others involved in this process.

The members of the Community began working on it, but things came to a halt after COVID, and the members were weary so in mid-2023, they reached out to Graeme to arrange some work parties to come and assist with the build. Over the next six months Graeme arranged for four work parties to go out to the Community and invest by helping in the construction

of the build. Most of those involved were pastors of local Geelong and Ballarat Churches, along with some young people from the churches and the wife of one of the pastors.

The focus of the build centred on completing the external cladding, painting, insulation and putting the gyprock or plasterboard up in the rooms of the Community Centre.

Together these teams worked with the members of the Community which instilled in them a great confidence and anticipation that the Community Centre would finally be completed. Friendships were deepened and the teams experienced the wonderful hospitality that the Community is known for - food, friendship, gifts, and encouragement. Overall, it was a great investment of teamwork showing that we truly are together on mission. And we give thanks to our God for His grace, joined with our effort, that together we move forward into the future





Opportunities to Flourish in a Safe Community

A visit to Rosebud Empowered Faith Community (EFC) in March allowed BUV Partnership Development Pastor, Andrew Naylor, to witness a safe space where people love to connect with each other and with the Christian faith.

Andrew enjoyed playing guitar and singing songs with Chris, a member of the Rosebud EFC. Chris writes upbeat worship songs for the group to sing together including one titled, God Is Great. Participation is key at Rosebud EFC where everyone is encouraged to play a part as they have dinner together, followed by a time of sharing, celebration and communion.

An EFC is a new form of discipleship community that provides an empowering and caring environment for people who are often marginalised or are experiencing significant life challenges, by showing them that they are cherished by God and can find their purpose in Him.

The Rosebud EFC known locally as the Community Hub, is a ministry of New Peninsula Baptist Church

who provide the organisational resources and very capable staff of the local ministry.

“It was very inspiring to see Rosebud EFC in action and it was a pleasure to be a part of the evening,” Andrew said. “It is very rare to see any community share so openly with each other, let alone a community where a significant number are vulnerable, have suffered in various ways or are just struggling in some way with everyday living. To see this and to hear people talking about how it is a safe place is quite remarkable. Add to that the overall safety people feel with each other and support that obviously happens through the week, in a faith context – along with worship, prayer and communion – is amazing.

“Whether you are a leader, meal server, participant or someone who just finds some level of belonging by turning up, God is clearly changing the lives of everyone involved through the love and care that exists.”

Co-founder and Rosebud EFC Team leader, Mark Matthews, said: “This is where we identify the needs of the community and utilise the assets

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God is clearly changing the lives of everyone involved through the love and care that exists.

within the same community to strengthen it. By encouraging the use of each other's strengths to meet each other's needs, we all become stronger. EFCs have a discipleship culture where spiritual parents (mentors) build authentic, trusting friendships. "Many people who come to a community meal see the world in a very different way to a middle-class person. Spiritual parents are trained to recognise this values gap and look beyond it to the person God created, and to build a relationship with them that is trusting and safe. Out of those relationships, they're building a discipleship relationship – some are reading the Bible one-on-one with people on the verandah of a local rooming house, or out in parks and gardens with those experiencing homelessness. One group in Brisbane is meeting in a coffee shop once a week to read the Bible together. We're teaching people who are doing life tough that they can actually hear from God Himself –teaching about the works and the words of Jesus and importantly encouraging them that God has a mission and a plan for them."

One participant, Adam, has a mild intellectual disability but rather than pitying him or doing things for him, at Rosebud EFC Adam is encouraged to fulfil a valued role in his community by playing clapping sticks in the worship band, helping set up and distribute communion. Another member battles with a chronic anxiety disorder, but he was encouraged to use his artistic talents to draw caricatures of people, and while doing so, share a verse and pray with them.

From fairly humble beginnings in 2014 at the Rosebud campus of New Peninsula Baptist Church under the leadership of the then campus Pastor, Richard Cathie and his Team Leader, Mark Matthews, the EFC model has grown exponentially over the last 10 years.

Drawing on their extensive community development and social work experience, co-founders Mark Matthews and Toby Baxter further developed the EFC framework grounded in Asset Based Community Development frameworks and thinking. This enabled the EFC model to grow and expand into other denominations and networks, nationally and internationally.

Mark Matthews adds "In terms of Christian growth nationally, we are seeing scores of people make first time faith commitments (double the rate of the mainstream church community), and they are following that up with Baptism and wanting to share their faith with their social peers."

Now a ministry of Crossway Baptist Church, EFC is offering churches in Australian capital cities and regional centres free training in how to run an EFC.

For details visit efc.org.au;
mark.matthews@efc.org.au



A Wealth of Ideas and Experiences Shared



Pastors and leaders from the BUV Generations Network (BGN) gathered in March for a day of connecting, encouragement and learning.

The BGN serves our Baptist Union by resourcing the people and ministries that focus on children, families, youths and young adults – with an emphasis on allowing them to network with one another for collegial support and inspiration.

Everyone had opportunities to worship together, hear messages from experienced pastors and develop their leadership skills in workshops. Gathering together allowed valuable community-building to take place as participants spent time with others who love the Lord and are passionate about leading young people in their journey of faith.



Rev Jonathan Stark



Peter Botross Church Health Consultant



Andrew Naylor Partnership Development Pastor

Three-Language Collaboration a Moving Experience

A desire to bring different languages and cultures together in Christ has prompted Mill Park Baptist Church (MPBC) to host trilingual services, with different aspects spoken in English, Arabic and Korean.

Senior Pastor Rev Geoff Shepherd said the church had really appreciated a stronger sense of community as they introduced an English and Arabic quarterly service, and then introduced the quarterly trilingual service once the Korean group began at the church.

Song words are displayed in all three languages, while different singers take the lead for each verse to give all three dialects a turn. When preaching, the three pastors speak for around 10 minutes each on the same Bible passage.

“It’s great fun, and it’s very moving,” Geoff said. “We did this two weeks ago and I had several people come to me in tears afterwards because they found it so moving. There’s something incredibly special about it. Even when language changes occur, throughout the music for example, it still sounds good and it doesn’t matter. The experience of hearing the different languages and praising God together more than makes up for that.

“We all know the kingdom of God is people of every nation, tribe and tongue, and when we’re singing together and celebrating those parts of our service together it’s a really stark reminder of our unity as the people of God. It makes you feel really proud that we’re praising God together, and one is not more important than the others. I wish we could do it in more languages again! We have a lot of Persian and African people in our church and I wish we could accommodate those languages as well.”

He has found that plenty of explanations throughout the service are crucial in bringing everyone together. “We have had to learn and tweak things as we go in response to people’s feedback. We try to explain to people that there will be some things happening that you don’t understand, but that’s what we want to do. Our friends who have come from overseas experience this every day as they seek to live in our culture, so while it might be a little bit different it’s definitely



worth doing.”

Geoff said MPBC had “tried as much as possible to accommodate rather than assimilate” different cultures into the church. “There are things we can change as Anglo-speaking Aussies, and there are things other cultures can change as well, so that we can come to a point of interacting and living together. Don’t be afraid of different cultures, they’re as rich as can be. These people try to live in our culture every day and they’re amazing.”

He said working as a multi-ethnic church was not necessarily straightforward, with implications on many aspects such as the way church runs, leadership and training. “We love those implications here – we embrace those challenges and we want ethnicities well represented in our leadership – we can’t cover everyone’s needs otherwise. I reckon it’s really exciting being able to learn about the other cultures – let alone their food, it’s awesome!”

Doveton Baptist Church is also fostering meaningful partnerships with congregations of multiple cultures. The church hosts English, South Sudanese, Filipino, Samoan and Tamil speaking services throughout the week. How wonderful that people from many places around the world who now call Doveton home can worship and celebrate Jesus in different languages in one church!

“
...we’re praising God together, and one is not more important than the others



Stand with Myanmar appeal



THANKYOU and Good News - Stand with Myanmar Update

Within the BUV, 56 (16%) of our church congregations originate from different ethnic groups within Myanmar. These churches are supporting both their local congregation members, and families and communities back in Myanmar.

In 2023, the BUV had a focus on Myanmar and ran several initiatives including our Stand with Myanmar campaign incorporating Myanmar Sunday, our national advocacy event CONVERGE and the BWAA “We must not forget Myanmar” postcard campaign, which detailed three key asks to the Australian government.

All efforts were undergirded in prayer, in addition to our National Ecumenical Prayer for Peace in Myanmar.

The impact from our Baptist campaigns focussing on Myanmar in 2023 has been far reaching with the positive results being felt both in Australia and Myanmar.

The advocacy effort

Throughout 2023, we asked Victorian Baptists to advocate on behalf of the people of Myanmar in many ways – on several occasions we provided several templates for letters to your local member of parliament to plead for the release of certain people held captive or for Australia to do something to end Myanmar’s violence.

In exciting news, and directly because of your

involvement and our combined advocacy in these initiatives, the first and most important ask from Baptist World Aid’s postcard campaign and our CONVERGE advocacy campaign has been granted by the Australian Government!

The Foreign Minister’s office announced on 1 February 2024, that Australia will impose new and immediate sanctions on the financial institutions that Myanmar’s tyrannical military junta use to fund their operations—further squeezing the junta’s capacity to continue their illegitimate administration. Please join us in praying that this will have some effect in moving the country towards a lasting peace, and a democratically elected government.

We’re grateful for this positive step forward, however there is still more to be done for our brothers and sisters in Myanmar and the Victorian Baptists, and indeed throughout Australia, will have the opportunity to continue to advocate throughout 2024 as we continue our campaigns.

The fundraising effort

The BUV and Baptist Mission Australia partnered together in 2023 in the Stand with Myanmar fundraising campaign and because of the incredible generosity of Baptist congregation members has now raised over \$120,000 through individual donations and church offerings. These funds have been disbursed to three projects in different ethnic areas of Myanmar to make life changing differences.

Thai Border and Myanmar

Appeal funds have enabled:

- Humanitarian relief to displaced Karen people – including food, medicine, clean water and temporary shelter
- Support to displaced students to access education
- Food relief for displaced students
- Wage and food support for more than 40 Karen teachers
- Leadership training and theological education for young Karen leaders

Kachin State:

Appeal funds have enabled:

- Support for the development and implementation of child protection training, to ensure the safety of displaced people across IDP camps in Kachin State.

Indian Border:

Appeal funds have enabled:

- Humanitarian relief to displaced Chin and other people from Myanmar
- Purchase of medical supplies for patients who cannot afford to get dialysis medications in refugee camps and other general medical supplies for IDPs in various camps in the Indian border region.
- Construction/repairs of school buildings for internally displaced people
- Purchase and supply of textbooks, stationery and educational tools and teaching aids for IDPs
- Support to hire teachers for children in IDP camps.
- Purchase of water storage tanks to provide clean water supplies to IDPs.
- Food support
- Trauma training for pastors [December 2023] – attended by more than 45 pastors from Myanmar and Manipur, with specialist training for pastors to better support people living with trauma

In 2024, The Stand with Myanmar campaign will be a national Baptist initiative brought to you by state associations, Baptist Mission Australia and Baptist World Aid Australia.

Karen Anniversary Lunch and service of celebration

It was a full house at Croydon Hills Baptist Church Sunday 17th March for the Karen Anniversary Lunch and service of celebration - 18years! Chris MacCartney and I enjoyed a delicious meal alongside seeing old and new friends (pastors Moo Hei and Andrew Harris, Kathy, Jordan and Tim from Sharing Hope, among others). Such a blessing to be in mission with these partners across the street and around the world. Good also to see the state member for Croydon greeting the congregation and giving thanks for the contribution the Karen community make to our wider society.



Culturally Diverse Lunches

One of the features of our Baptist Union of Victoria to be celebrated is our cultural diversity. 39% of our congregations speak languages other than, or in addition to English. The multicultural nature of our union provides much depth to our experiences and enables our reach to be wide and deep in communities around Victoria.

All our BUV Support Hub team members love to interact and serve pastors and leaders across the cultures and our multicultural consultants can connect more on a day to day basis.

Across 2024, Director of Mission and Ministries, Rev Daniel Bullock is hosting a series of lunches with Pastors representing specific language groups to listen to their needs and identify ways in which we can continue to best serve and support these churches. We have hosted three lunches to date with the Chin Pastors from the East of Melbourne, Chin Pastors from the West of Melbourne and with some of the Samoan Pastors in Melbourne.

Daniel looks forward to meeting with and Pastors from the remaining language groups across the year.



Samoan Pastors



Chin Pastors - West



Chin Pastors - East

Translation Transforms Training

Meet the BUV's Safe Church Consultant, Vicky Dyer, who coordinates church-safety training in a range of native languages other than English (LOTE) to make it more accessible and efficient for hundreds of church communities.



It has been my pleasure to spend the second half of 2023 and the start of 2024, engaging with and empowering Languages Other Than English (LOTE) communities in the Safe Church area.

Wherever possible, Creating Safe Spaces (CSS) presenters are engaged from a range of LOTE communities. This means they can communicate directly with participants, rather than using an interpreter, and can offer culturally relevant examples from personal experience. It is particularly helpful for our congregations from Myanmar because there are almost no resources regarding Safe Church available in their languages (Karen and Chin, Zotung etc) provided by the government or other denominations.

Over the past year, the BUV has worked to find new ways to engage and empower LOTE communities in the Safe Church area. We ran three CSS workshops in languages other than English in 2023 – Karen (a Myanmar language), Mandarin and Vietnamese – which trained a total of 147 leaders from 15 local churches.

We also shared translated resources, feedback and presenter expertise with the Baptist Association of NSW and ACT (BANSW/ACT). In November Yvonne Zheng, a BANSW/ACT employee and presenter, came to Melbourne to present in Mandarin and to train our new BUV Mandarin presenter, Pastor Min Zhang. The BUV partnered with BANSW/ACT to offer a CSS online module and a suite of Safe Church documents in simplified Chinese.

Another innovation was to offer headsets to provide simultaneous interpretation from English into Vietnamese – thank you to Sion Church, Derrimut, and their Pastor John Truong for generously offering their new facilities. This enabled participants and presenters to meet face-to-face and discuss Safe Church in real time, rather than taking double the duration to interpret consecutively, or line-by-line.

A handful of participants were able to join a Safe Church workshop while overseas by using Zoom.

The BUV has some exciting plans moving forward, such as promoting a CSS online module and Safe Church resources in Korean and traditional Chinese, in partnership with BANSW/ACT.

We will run five LOTE workshops, this time including the languages of Hakha Chin and Zotung (spoken in Myanmar and surrounds).

It is a joy to work with pastors and leaders to not only interpret the spoken word, but also translate written information. It's been such a blessing to meet with so many church leaders in person, to receive their feedback and to put it into practice. This feedback included offering Closed Captions (like subtitles) during Zoom workshops for people who are hard of hearing, and offering workshops on each day of the week.

My personal highlight from 2023 was presenting a workshop with nine Karen-speaking churches in Corio (Geelong). It was so exciting and humbling to hear how some churches who attended three years prior had put much of what they had learned into practice. I was also thrilled that two of the churches had been formed in the past three years, and that they are prioritising Safe Church and engaging with the BUV and local churches. Several teams had driven many hours and even stayed overnight to attend.

My personal passion has always been to help make churches safer, more inclusive and more welcoming. My goal for 2024 is for the CSS training to become even more effective at supporting many diverse local churches to bless and minister to their communities.

For more about BUV's CSS training or anything Safe Church related, contact vicky.dyer@buvs.com.au

LOTE workshops conducted

- 103 people from 7 Karen churches
- 26 people from 5 Mandarin churches
- 18 people from 3 Vietnamese churches



PARTNERSHIP NEWS

Understanding Generosity in a New Way

Adam was born and raised in Beijing. His mother was baptised in 1990 and she had a terrific influence on his life. In 1999 he went to London to study, and the dormitory he stayed in was next to Spurgeon’s well-known church – Metropolitan Tabernacle. His own faith grew there as he studied the bible. He was baptised in 2003 at a Baptist church in Newcastle, England. He then migrated to Australia in 2008 and since then has been part of two Baptist congregations in Melbourne.

In 2018 he started to think more about his giving to God. At the time he was developing a couple of businesses and at one point made a large donation to his local church waiting expectantly to see what would happen to his business. But things got tougher! He even had to sell some beloved assets to feed his family but kept pursuing God whilst still working on his business. As Adam reflects, “During 2020 I began a journey of thinking differently about the purpose behind my giving. I started thinking and praying more about how my money could be used most effectively not just through random giving and also not just because I wanted to see something in return.”

Looking for a bigger platform he became aware of the Baptist Union of Victoria. “I spoke with the BUV Support Hub’s Partnership Development Pastor, and we had a very encouraging conversation. I was inspired by the BUV’s approach to Church Planting and realised that my donations could play a significant role in that.” However, the next couple of years were difficult. His mother passed away in China and he lost a business due to the times we were in. “The Pastor at the BUV was always in the loop with information, and we met, talked and prayed together regularly. I felt appreciated and valued as a person but also realised that this was a significant way that I could partner with what God

wanted to do on earth, bringing His love and care to others in places where churches didn’t yet exist”.

Realising this, in 2023 Adam made what he felt was a covenant with God to donate a certain amount but by the end of the year, he had donated three times that figure! “This journey together has changed my life. I’ve worked hard on developing my business but at the same time I have been committed to my vision for giving because I had realised that giving was about being generous with whatever I had at any stage, not about what I would get in return.

“What I then realised was that I wanted my business to succeed so that I could give. It gave my hard work so much more inspiration and meaning. I would never have imagined this, but this has been one of the great joys of my life. I am excited to continue to partner with the opportunities of seeing God’s kingdom come through church planting and placemaking in Victoria. I am also inspired about what I see God is doing in me not just through me.”

In February this year, Adam took a trip with Andrew Naylor and Danny Ang from the BUV office. They visited Olivine, Donnybrook where they met with church planters Kathryn Jensen and Michelle Mitchell over lunch. Kathryn and Michelle were able to communicate both the difficulties and the rewards of planting something new in a completely new environment. As they have expressed, “It feels like just the beginning and it is hard ground, but God is blessing the work.”

Adam was impacted deeply by the work being done and remarked later “Michelle and Kathryn are God’s good servants, for sure. It is great to partner with this kind of work.”

RESOURCES



BUV together on mission PODCAST



Welcome to our TOGETHER ON MISSION podcast, brought to you by the Baptist Union of Victoria, and hosted by our Director of Mission and Ministries, Rev Daniel Bullock. Daniel will be joined by a guest from our Victorian Baptist family each week for a brief discussion that aims to encourage you in your personal walk of faith and give you some practical suggestions that you can implement through your week.

Throughout this year the podcast will be focusing on the theme of Being and Sharing the Good News



Part 1 - Sharing Jesus' mission of hope ** Released 19 March**

In this first episode of Part 1 of the Together on Mission podcast Rev Daniel Bullock and Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson are talking about Hope and more specifically, the opportunity we have to join with Jesus in spreading his message of hope to a broken world.



Part 2 - Hope in the midst of fear and uncertainty **Released 26 March**

In the second episode of Part 1 of the Together on Mission podcast Rev Daniel Bullock and Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson are reflecting on holding on to hope amid fear and uncertainty.



Part 3 - Sharing hope by loving my enemies **Released 2 April**

In the third episode of Part 1 of the Together on Mission podcast Rev Daniel Bullock and Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson are looking at the challenging passage Matthew 5:43-44 and the command to love our enemies.



Part 4 - Shining Jesus' hope in a dark world **Released 9 April**

In the fourth episode of Part 1 of the Together on Mission podcast Rev Daniel Bullock and Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson reflect on Matthew 5:14 - *"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."*



Part 5 - Confidence to share the Good News **Released 16 April**

In the final episode of Part 1 of the Together on Mission podcast Rev Daniel Bullock and Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson are talking about some assets that give us the confidence to be able to share the good news and bring hope to our communities

Listen now via spotify, apple play, or direct from the BUV website - buu.com.au/togetherpodcast2024



BECAUSE OF JESUS

4-part Easter Devotion series

Part 1: Hope Restored – Being and Sharing Good News

As we move towards the Easter season, I want to invite you to reflect afresh on the good news that through His death, resurrection and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, Jesus defeated the powers of sin and death and gave us the hope and power to live a full, redeemed, and a productive life that will extend beyond our earthly existence. The easter story declares that for those of us who follow Jesus, nothing can separate us from the love of God. Hallelujah! This is fantastic news. Of course, the natural response to such good news is to celebrate and rejoice. However, in addition to rejoicing the Bible is clear that we are not to keep the Easter good news story to ourselves. We are to share this good news by the way we live out our lives and through proclamation. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that being and sharing the Good News is to be our mission in life.

In Luke chapter 4 Jesus clearly explained his mission. You know this passage well. Jesus goes into the synagogue in Nazareth, he stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the scroll that contained words from the prophet Isaiah,

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the
prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

At the end of reading the scroll, Jesus handed it back and said, today this Scripture is fulfilled in your presence. In other words, this is Jesus’ mission. Throughout the scriptures Jesus practically illustrates his mission through his many miracles and acts of compassion, love, mercy, and justice. The blind are given sight, deaf, hearing. Dead are raised, hungry fed and oppressed set free. With Jesus, it was always word and action, preaching and deed. Jesus mission was a mission of hope to the hopeless, freedom for those in bondage, fullness of life to those who merely existed. It was good news!

While Jesus specifically says this is his mission, that he is the fulfillment of the Scripture, we know from passages like Matt 22:39 that describe the great commandment, or Matt 28’s declaration of the great commission or Acts 1:8 where it talks about Jesus disciples being witnesses throughout world, that those of us who are filled with the Spirit and claim to be disciples of Jesus, share in this mission. We partner with the resurrected Christ in his ongoing redemptive work in the world.

Well, what does this look like in our churches and individual lives? I have no doubt the programs we run in our church can form part of the work of bringing hope to our communities. Therefore, I think it is always important to be auditing our programs and physical assets and ask are they being used to serve our mission, are they bearing fruit?

However, in addition to our property and program assets, there are other assets that we have at our fingertips, that I think are the keys to sharing the Good News and providing hope to our communities.

And they are what I would call, our spiritual assets - Our spiritual assets are the tools given to us by God to impact this world - the fruit of the spirit. Spiritual assets refer to the qualities that enable us to do what is right and good – for ourselves and for others. Like Jesus mission springing from the words read in the synagogue, they are the actions that manifest from our words and convictions, they are our faith in action, the Spirit at work through us in the world.

Spiritual assets that are particularly important to being and sharing Good News and bringing hope to our communities include:

- Being generous towards others – word, deeds, and resources.
- Showing compassion – caring for those in our street who may or may not have others to care for them.
- Offering Forgiveness and reconciliation – lifting the burden of guilt.
- Providing Appreciation and gratitude- a friendly word, a smile, praise.
- Sharing Hospitality and inclusion – to neighbours even strangers who are in need.
- Advocating justice- speaking out and not remaining silent when a community members rights have been violated.
- Providing Patience and Humility- sharing credit, elevating others.
- Showing tolerance and acceptance

These are the spiritual assets that spread Good News and provide hope in our community. .

Friends, right now, our world needs hope. Our world needs Good News. And we, not only have the message of hope, but we have the capacity, the power the spiritual assets to meet that need and spread hope.

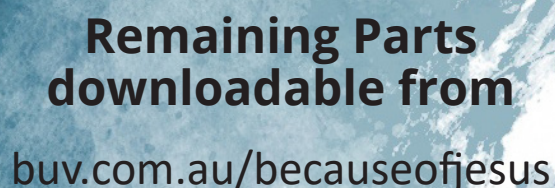
I sincerely hope, I pray, that Easter will be an enriching season for you as you reflect on its message. I pray it will be a season of contemplation leading to repentance, gratitude, and celebration. But I also pray that it will prompt us to be and share the Good News. That we will be re-enthused to engage in our mission to advance the Kingdom of God, the ways of Jesus, our mission to bring about justice, mercy,

grace, salvation, righteousness and forgiveness, our mission to bring positive change in our society, our mission to spread hope in our communities.

Questions for reflection or discussion

- How can you not only reflect on the implications of Easter for yourself, but fan into flame the passion to be and share the Good News with the broader community?
- What spiritual assets do you possess that you think will benefit your community/ neighbourhood and inspire hope? Why?

Rev Daniel Bullock



**Remaining Parts
downloadable from**
buv.com.au/becauseofjesus

Part 1: Hope restored - Being and Sharing Good News

Part 2: Palm Sunday and Holy Week

Part 3: Good Friday

Part 4: Easter Sunday

AGENCY NEWS

Introducing Baptist Insurance Services new Chief Executive Officer



Bronson Justus commenced his new role as CEO of BIS in early March this year.

With over 30 years in the insurance industry, Bronson comes with a wealth of experience and a heart to support and serve the Baptist Family. He has an extensive understanding in the setting up and operations of Discretionary Mutual Funds (DMF) and is excited to further develop options for cover and protection for our constituents.

Our DMF (Baptist Mutual) currently provides property and contents cover and has been up and running for around 6 months. To date across Australia, we have paid out over \$1,700,000 in claims, allowing our members to continue their operations with minimal disruption. Baptist Mutual is achieving its goal to provide cost-effective protection for its members with the broadest cover available. We encourage you to visit our website, www.baptistinsurance.com.au for further information, particularly in the area of risk management. In order to continue a sustainable and cost-effective DMF, it relies on each of our members investing time into risk management, taking ownership to protect its property and people.



We look forward to continuing our partnership with Victorian Baptist churches in 2024 and beyond.

If you require login details to our website or have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact us at insurance@baptistinsurance.com.au.



I am excited about the opportunity to serve as a steward of the national insurance and risk management program for Baptist organisations in Australia...The notion of serving God by caring for Churches and other Baptist Agencies aligns seamlessly with my personal values and professional aspirations. I am deeply committed to assisting these organisations.

Baptist Financial Services turns 40



With 40 years of work, knowledge and experience across the church landscape in Australia, BFS would have to be one of the most interconnected Christian ministries in Australia.

We've had the privilege of supporting over one thousand five hundred churches and ministries, and sewn back over \$30 million into ministry through our sponsorships and grants, developing a network of relationships across the country.

Across the years a guiding light among our teams has been "better together" – our role to foster unity and work together to see ministry thrive and enable people to meet Jesus. There is so much more kingdom work we can do, if we do it together. It sounds easy but it isn't always the case. That's the beautiful thing about BFS's

humility in their mission to simply serve the Church.

While financial services is fairly stayed and some may even say a boring industry, our focus on being a relational ministry, with a client services team and relationship managers on the ground, has become a distinguishing difference of BFS compared to some banks and financial organisations.

Since its inception in 1984, Baptist Financial Services has held strongly to our relational values that have shaped our identity and helped us to live out our call "to enable Christian ministry to thrive."

Building relationships on the right foundations will help ensure our stability and longevity long into the future.

Ross Langford, Board Chair

2024 EVENTS



We are looking forward to this year's Multicultural Pastors Retreat! This is an opportunity to connect with God, with other BUW Pastors and Leaders from our LOTE Churches, and some of the BUW Support Hub staff.

There will be time for conversations, prayer, worship, as well as fun camp activities. Spouses are welcome to accompany Pastors.

Date: Monday 6 May, 12pm - Wednesday 8 May
Venue: Belgrave Heights Convention Centre, Hope Centre, 3 Convention Ave, Belgrave Heights

Register online: buv.com.au/events



This day will help you gain more skills and help you minister with less effort in the area of pastoral care! Join, Rev Jonathan Stark (Head of Pastoral Leadership Support & Development), Rev Dr Bill Brown (Pastoral Coach) and Pst Heather Dunning (Associate Pastor for Pastor Care at Diamond Valley Baptist Church) as they facilitate an environment where learning, discussion and the sharing of ideas around pastoral care can take place.

Date: Monday April 29 2024
Time: 9:30am - 3:00pm
Cost: \$25.00
Where: BUW Support Hub, Camberwell

Register online: buv.com.au/events

PREPARE  ENRICH

Do you want to help couples build more resilient relationships, preparing well for their marriage and /or enriching their marriage relationship? Prepare is a trusted relationship assessment and can help give couples skills that they need for a lifelong marriage.

Date: Wednesday April 24, 2024
Time: 9:00am-4:00pm
Where: Crossway Baptist Church, 2 Vision Drive Burwood East 3151
Cost: \$150 * Plus booking fee. Includes a digital resource kit. Please bring your own device (eg. Tablet or Laptop)

Register online: buv.com.au/events



Church Admin Workshop

Do you have questions about your church's administration, properties, finance, governance, insurance, professional standards and safe church responsibilities?

This one day workshop will give you an overview of these topics and will introduce you to key personnel at the BUW Support Hub that are available to assist you on an ongoing basis.

Date: Saturday 20 July, 2024
Time: 9:30am - 4:00pm (Registration from 9:15am)
Cost: Free
Where: BUW Support Hub Office, Camberwell
Morning Tea and Lunch will be provided

Register online: buv.com.au/events

MARRIAGE CELEBRANT TRAINING

The purpose of this training is to enable you to be well prepared to offer effective pastoral care and marriage preparation, lead meaningful wedding services and provide ethical and legally competent ministry as a marriage celebrant for the BUV, CCVT or CCCVaT.

This training day is for new celebrants and experienced celebrants who are in need of refresher training.

Date: Thursday Oct 24, 2024

Time: 9:30am - 3:00pm

Where: BUV Support Hub, Camberwell

Cost: \$59.95

Register online: bu.com.au/events



CREATING
SAFE
SPACES

The Baptist Union of Victoria is committed to ensuring that our churches are safe places, particularly for children, youth and other vulnerable people, by providing training for leaders and volunteers who serve in the church's various ministries. Training opportunities are scheduled throughout the year:

- April 23 - Online via zoom
- May 5 - Online via zoom
- June 1 - Kangaroo Flat
- June 22 - Hawthorn West Baptist Church
- June 26 - Online via zoom
- July 25 - Online via zoom

Register online: bu.com.au/events

members DINNER



The Baptist Union of Victoria holds Members of Assembly meetings (Members' Dinner) twice a year in May and October.

The details for our May Members' Dinner are:

Date: Friday 24th May, 2024

Time: 6:00pm - 9:30pm (Registration from 5:15pm)

Venue: Karralyka Centre, Mines Rd, Ringwood VIC 3134

Online Registration will be open shortly: bu.com.au/events



nourish

Nourish is a day for all pastors to be enriched through messages and stories, fellowship and connections.

The details for our May Nourish are:

Date: Friday 24th May, 2024

Time: 9am - 3pm

Venue: NewHope Baptist Church, Blackburn North

Online Registration will be open shortly: bu.com.au/events

APRIL

2024 Prayer Calendar

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1 West Melbourne Baptist Church	2 West Preston Baptist Church	3 Wodonga District Baptist Church - Albury Campus	4 Wodonga District Baptist Church - Wodonga Campus	5 Wonthaggi Baptist Church	6 Zo Baptist Church of Melbourne
7 Zomi Baptist Church Victoria	8 Zomi Mission Church	9 Zotung Baptist Church	10 Aberdeen Street Baptist Church	11 Aberfeldie Baptist Church	12 Albert Park Baptist Church	13 Altona Baptist Church
14 Anglesea Baptist Church	15 Arabic Baptist Church	16 Arise City Church	17 Armadale Baptist Church	18 Ashburton Baptist Church	19 Auburn Baptist Church	20 Australian Christian Baptist Church
21 Australian Gospel Baptist Church	22 Australia Zophei Church Inc	23 Australia Zotung Church	24 Bacchus Marsh Baptist Church	25 Bairnsdale Baptist Church	26 Ballarat North Baptist Church	27 Balwyn Baptist Church
29 Beaconsfield Baptist Church	30 Beaumaris - Mordialloc Baptist Church					

Here at the Baptist Union Support Hub we believe that together, in prayer and listening to His voice, we can be the voice others need to hear through this new season.

We'd love you to join us in daily prayers for our churches, leaders, communities.

buv.com.au/pray