

Warden's Report

It has been a pleasure to work with the Parish Council and Ministry team throughout the past year and also with the many members of the congregation who volunteer their time and talents to maintain our ministry, buildings and grounds. This year Alan Luff, Jason Cooke, Michelle Lindau and Richard Stone joined the Parish Council and their input has been welcomed and valued. The established format of meetings has continued with all meetings commencing with a devotional talk, prayer and reflection before attending to agenda items.

The wardens have endeavoured to attend each of the church services at some time during the year, including Colo Vale from September 2014. They have also been involved in planning for John's retirement, Don's resignation, Matthew's appointment and the ongoing discussions of an appointment of a Youth Minister.

The main responsibility of the wardens is to look after the property of St Stephens and St Pauls. Following the completion of the roof project in early 2014, this has been a quieter year, with more attention to maintenance than major projects.

The essential but onerous task of reviewing our Risk Management practices has been completed by Bill Crawshaw and a Property review was carried out by Bill and Sam with Richard's assistance. Our fire and security systems are checked on a regular basis and an 'order book' initiated to keep purchases better organised. The wardens have also been involved in discussion on a smoking policy, purchase of a freezer and the need for an equipment shed.

Graham has maintained an interest in grant applications with a submission being made to the State Government for play equipment at both churches (no response as yet). The previous State Government grant, for tree lopping and shade sail at St Pauls, has been acquitted. In May 2014 it was a pleasant surprise to receive an additional \$1000.00 from the Wingecarribee Heritage Assistance scheme, bringing council assistance for the roof to \$5000.00.

A special word of thanks is extended to the Lidden family for the donation of a new stained glass window in the heritage building.

Our appreciation goes to Rodney Wilson for organising the grounds roster and to all those who have been involved in maintaining our property and grounds.

The Wardens would like to thank Richard, John, Don, Matthew and Dina and all Parish Council members for their support, service and fellowship. Our appreciation goes to those members who are retiring from Parish Council and to Sam who is stepping down from his role as warden. Sam's experience has been invaluable in property matters and he will be sorely missed. We praise God for all retiring members and thank them for their devotion and service.

As always, we acknowledge how gracious God has been to the Ministry team, Parish Council and congregation at St Stephen's; for this we give Him the glory.

The Wardens: Sam Caltabiano, Bill Crawshaw & Graham Rose

Mittagong Anglican Church – Internet Report 2014

Prominent American Evangelical author Kevin De Young writes:

"Your website is the front door of your church for many, many people. If you'd put a greeter at the front door of your

physical church...and make sure all the signs are attractive and pointing in the right direction, surely you ought to take the same care with your church's website."

This is why our church has a website – and why I aim to make information about our church as accessible as possible to potential newcomers to church. More and more people are googling a church before visiting it – and indeed in many conversations I've had with newcomers and visitors to church they have mentioned visiting our website before they visited our physical site. This is why we have an **online presence**.

Our website, www.mittang.com.au includes information on our church services and times, weddings, baptisms and funerals, our link missionaries, St. Stephen's history, our staff, about us, our six main children and youth ministries, our adult ministries and contact details, and a regularly updated News Blog.

It also is where the audio recordings of our sermons can be listened to. In 2014, I changed the way the sermons are stored (now on Amazon S3 instead of on the site itself, although it is still easily accessible for listeners) which has enabled us to increase the capacity of our Online Sermon Library, including all sermons from 2011 to today, including sermons unique to our Sunday @ 6 service. There are currently 222 sermons in the online library, with storage room available for many more.

Like our physical church centre here at St. Stephen's, the website aims to provide both an inviting and informative front door as well as a valuable 'space' in which we as a church can conduct ministry - it is a tool which helps show Christ to the world as well as help church members to know Christ and grow in him.

Other major changes to the website in 2014 included a change in web hosts, which has decreased website maintenance costs significantly. Our new host is an Australian Christian company who have excellent customer service, which I have found very helpful.

In addition to the church website itself, I also maintain our Facebook page www.facebook.com/MittagongAnglican, which currently has more than 151 likes. In 2014, I aimed to post regular updates, including church news items, articles that I thought may be of interest to people, bible verses from that Sunday's readings, occasional prayer points, quotes from sermons and links to our Online Sermon Library. This has resulted in increased engagement on the page. Our church was also regularly 'checked in' to throughout the year, with a particular spike at the community carols event.

I think our Facebook page is also important in our church branding - for example, if someone in the community wants to check out our church, they might go to our Facebook page and see that some of their friends 'like' the page, meaning they are more likely to come to a service or group because of the personal endorsement.

In addition to the website and Facebook page, I also ensure that our details are kept up-to-date in various online directories, and that they link to our church website, meaning more people can find out about us.

Ideas for the future include making better use of photography and video on our church website, changing to a responsive design for better use on mobile devices and including some personal testimonies of church members. If you have any more ideas, or feedback, or would like to help me in looking after our online presence, please let me know at sm@mittang.com.au - I'd love to hear from you.

I am happy to continue to voluntarily coordinate our church's internet ministry as we look to 2014 and beyond as to how to more effectively use the medium of the internet to help people to KNOW CHRIST, GROW IN CHRIST and SHOW CHRIST TO THE WORLD.

Samuel Mills – Webmaster

Crossroads Senior High Youth Group Report 2014

Crossroads is Mittagong Anglican's Senior High youth group, for students in years 9 to 12. It runs on Sundays at 4pm at church during term time.

The aim of our group is really the same as that of our church – we want the students who come along to Know Christ, Grow in Christ and Show Christ to the World.



In the senior years of school, young people really are at a crossroads – there’s decisions to be made about which school subjects to do, what to spend free time on, how much study to do for upcoming exams, which afterschool activities to do, whether to start an apprenticeship, go to Uni or take a job, and most importantly, whether to live with Jesus as Lord of their life. At Crossroads, we aim to encourage youth to choose to actively live as disciples of Jesus no matter which road they take after school. We’d love to see them still living as Christians years after they have graduated from youth group.

2014 saw Steve Dunn and I continue as Crossroads leaders, with Lachlan McGuire joining the leadership team as part of his Year 13 Gap Year ministry placement, and Kathryn McIntosh also coming on board. It has been very encouraging to see both of them connecting with and encouraging the young people who come along each week. It is exciting that all four leaders are continuing in 2015.

A typical Crossroads session begins with a game or activity – anything from a board game to a game of badminton to a giant jigsaw puzzle. The aim of this is to have a bit of fun, engage the youth and facilitate interaction. Then a Bible study takes place – this usually runs for about half of Crossroads. The aims of the Bible study are to help the youth actively read and discuss the Word, and see how it applies to them today. It is also an opportunity to introduce them to what it looks like to read the Bible in its context and in light of the gospel, and apply it to their lives – skills that we hope will be useful in their personal Bible reading, future Bible studies and everyday life. A light supper then follows the study, before those involved in the Sunday @ 6 music team begin music practice, and others either go home or stay around for the 6pm service. Attendance at weekly Crossroads meetings for 2014 were usually about 7 – 11 youth, plus leaders. In Term 1, our Bible study times focussed on giving personal testimonies – helping youth to share with others how they have come to know Christ. In Term 2 we looked at a brief overview of the Bible, and in Term 3 we went through a series called ‘Meeting Jesus and getting to know him better’. In term 4 we studied the book of Hebrews, which was challenging at times but was very worthwhile.

Other activities Crossroads was involved in throughout the year included a combined beach day with The Bridge junior high group and The Chocolate Club young adults group, a bike ride, a movie night after Sunday @ 6 one week, Youth Merge events combined with the other youth groups of the Highlands (including one held at St. Stephen’s, and a bonfire night held at St. Paul’s), and attending the youth conference KYCK at Katoomba. With 13 youth from Crossroads and more than 2,000 overall, it was a great weekend of music, fellowship and delving into the meaning of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

It has been a great year seeing the young people grow in their understanding of the Bible and continuing in their walk with God. It has also been great seeing how the youth in our group with learning difficulties have been accepted and cared for by everyone. A real excitement has been seeing young people from non-Christian families come along to the group, invited by friends seeking not only to Know Christ and Grow in Christ, but also to Show Christ to the World.

Samuel Mills, on behalf of the Crossroads Leadership Team

Annual report from SRE co-ordinator Robyn Caltabiano

2014 SRE at Mittagong and COLO VALE Public Schools

Program:

The Connect program for year B was taught from grade 1-5.

Kindergarten program “Beginning with God”

Year 6 program “Big Questions”

Resources were purchased to support this program.

Cost of the program: \$2114.65

We continue to have a classroom focus on teaching the children to pray, many teachers reported students very receptive to prayer. It is impressive to see our teachers recording students' prayer points and praying for them during the week.

Kindergarten Orientation:

We were invited to Kindergarten orientation at both schools. Don Taylor spoke at CVPS about the teaching program being offered for kindergarten students. At MPS orientation although we are invited we are not permitted to speak. In 2015 I will not attend this orientation, as it is a total waste of time.

Parents must tick the box on the enrolment form, which gives permission for students to enrol in SRE classes.

SRE Prayer points are published in the Mac Update and included for prayer in our service. Thankyou to Coralie for keeping track of prayer points.

We would like to ask the congregation if teachers and students of SRE could be remembered in their prayers on Tuesday and thursday mornings.

Teachers

This year we saw the retirement of Denyse Merchant who is going to India for mission work. Denyse is a member of the Baptist congregation.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Denyse , she has been teaching SRE at CVPS for many many years. We thank her for her dedication and service to God over many years in our local schools.

We also thank Don Taylor who has taught SRE at CVPS for a few years. Don has gone into other full time work which doesn't allow him the flexibility to teach SRE.

We have very supportive teacher contacts at both schools who meet with all teachers at the beginning of the year., are keen to help in class management roles and in encouraging students to attend SRE classes.

Assemblies:

We have 2 combined assemblies each year. One at Easter, one at Christmas.

This past year we have been delighted to again have Wollondilly Anglican School drama classes, who come to our assemblies and present the Easter and the Christmas message in a "young" way...

Many thanks to Sarah Talbot and the Principal of WAC for their enthusiasm and inspiration..

At CVPS all SRE classes join these services, those of every denomination.

At MPS, despite a personal invitation, the Catholic classes run their own Easter and Christmas assemblies.

Teacher training:

Teachers are responsibly training and updating their accreditation, with Youthworks. St Stephens runs child protection seminars, Youth Works offers training days.

Thank you for your support and prayers, Robyn Caltabiano

Mittagong MU Branch - Report for AGM 7 March 2015

The MU Branch at St Stephens Mittagong began 2014 with a new President. Beverly Fulton has taken over the leadership of our group and is continuing to keep the group informed of local, regional and world issues.

Many friendships are being nurtured through this group – either in prayer or over a cuppa, but always with the underlying knowledge that we are loved by God and he knows our every need. We had a busy start to the year, our monthly meetings have been well attended and we have had a variety of speakers. We have heard from a number of parishioners who have worked overseas in very difficult conditions – from Christmas Island with refugees to Philippines with orphans and urban poor. We have also heard from Bev Ovens and her work with Sudanese women. Richard Mills and Zara Pennicook led us on studies of David. Our then assistant minister – Don Taylor – talked of God and Science and how they are not against one another, but rather how they

complement each other in all aspects. Our group has also heard from Janis Donohoo and her untiring chaplaincy work.

On a lighter note we had a wonderful "Christmas in July" cooking demonstration by Barbara Sinden and I am sure our Christmas tables benefitted for the lovely recipes from the night.

October was a very busy month for us with a day bus trip to Leura Gardens which was very enjoyable and we all marvelled at the beautiful flowers of that area. The weather was perfect for strolling through gardens.

We were pleased to welcome Di Davies to our regular meeting and enjoyed hearing from her and then meeting her more informally over lunch.

Also during October, our group hosted a lunch for Dr Wendy Le Marquand from Ethiopia to hear of her work with the WASH program.

Our MU Choir performed for our "Carols, Candles and Finger Food" evening as well as singing at the Cubby Club end of year functions.

MU has also catered for a number of events so far this year. "Gorgeous Grandmas" have served afternoon tea for a number of funerals (both parishioners and general public) and assisted in a church luncheon for 150 people as well as hosting the CMS dinner for 136 people.

MU is a strong group of women (and men) who know Christ, are growing in Christ and who are showing Christ to the world.

Beverley Fulton

Mittagong MU Branch President.

TIME OUT REPORT 2014

During the year up to 9 women, all but one members of St.Stephen's, have met on the first Monday morning of the month for a couple of hours of sharing the experiences of caring for frail husbands. It is an informal time when information about outside support services is exchanged, confidences shared and mutual support offered. There is no obligation to share if anyone is diffident. It is understood that strict confidence is observed. When Richard is in his office he kindly makes us cappuccinos for which we are grateful.

If you are a woman whose husband is dependent on you for care please join us.

Barbara Beard and Anne Wardle

The Bridge youth group report for AGM 7.3.15

The Bridge is a group for youth, years 6 to 9, focussing on fun, fellowship and the bible. The main purpose of The Bridge is to provide a fun and safe environment for youth from any background where they can meet new people and learn about Jesus. Rather than a bible study for church youth, The Bridge is focussed on outreach to youth in the local community, especially those who do not go to church, and is run accordingly. The Bridge runs every Friday night of school term from 7pm to 9pm and typically includes various high energy games, a short supper and a 10min talk on the bible.

The Bridge commenced at the start of 2013 and continued to grow in numbers through 2014. From an initial core group of 10 youth, mainly from church and the Southern Highlands Christian School, The Bridge had over 33 names on the contact list in 2014 and regular attendance of 15 to 20 each week. Of these, there were over 10 youth who did not attend a church that were some of the more regular attendees. The main action that resulted in the groups growth was friends inviting other friends. Over half of the regular attendees were in yr 9 during 2014 so will now be moving on to the Cross roads youth group in 2015.

Apart from the regular Friday night activities during 2014, The Bridge attended KYCK 2014, went night bushwalking, organised a chalk chase, had a movie night, held a winter bonfire and enjoyed an overnight camping trip at the coast. The Bridge had 4 leaders in 2014 – Peter Lee, George Foster, Andy Lee & Jess Mander. They were then joined by Ben Gambrill and several female students from Capernwray during term 4. This leadership team is continuing in 2015 apart from Jess Mander who, living in Wollongong and driving up each Friday night, has decided to have a break. We thank Jess for her part in running the group.

Securing female leaders is a current difficulty for the Bridge. Term 1 2015 has commenced a roster system where three willing females (Coralie Taylor, Anne Sharwood, Kathryn McIntosh) have volunteered to assist us on a casual basis. The Bridge is very thankful for their contribution as we must have a female adult present at all our activities. Training and raising up new leaders to bring youth to Christ is also a goal of The Bridge and the older youth within The Bridge are given this opportunity if they are interested.

The Bridge leadership team looks forward to serving Christ in running this ministry in 2015 and being a part of God's plan for youth in the Highlands.

George Foster, on behalf of The Bridge team

MITTAGONG REGION ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mission Report for the 2014 AGM

- 1. Mission Focus:** Over the last year we have had significant exposure to mission:
In Sunday services: Regular prayer; Visiting missionaries, "mission spots";
Various forms of "local mission";
Short Term Overseas Mission Trips;
In terms of MAC's Mission Statement we have endeavoured to encourage as many people as possible to "show Christ to the world" starting in Mittagong.
- 2. Missionaries regularly supported through prayer and giving:**
Sadly Ralph and Kylie Whitten had to leave their ministry with CMS in Spain because of ill health. With increasing difficulties of obtaining resident visas, inter-net accessibility and easy access by air to most parts of the world some of our link missionaries are now based in Australia. Former link missionaries now retired may still be prayed for and designated gifts forwarded to them.

Our link missionaries are now:

Haddon Family: CMS Santiago

Knight Family: BCA Port Hedland

Podmores: FEBC Cambodia

Dina Roki and other members of the Philippines Teams: OMF based ministry in the Philippines

Pennicooks: Supporting church leaders with Theological/Biblical Training and Health Education

Bishop Praises Omole: Northern Nigeria

Groups:

Bible League

Southern Highland Christian Education

- 3. Present and Past Members of MAC at Present Training for Ministry**
Erica Lee: Ministry Training Scheme: Student Ministry at Wollongong University
Lachlan McGuire in "Year 13" with Youth works
The need to prayer for, encourage and, for Erica, to financially support through MTS.
- 4. Short Term Overseas Mission Trips**
Ian Pennicook to Myanmar twice, Zara to Cambodia and at present in Manila
The 2014 Mission Team to Manila: Dina Roki, Andrew and Anne, Ambrose and Jemma Sharwood, Kathy and Annalise Crawshaw
- 5. Prayer**
Weekly Prayer Points were placed in the MAC Update for mission both in Mittagong and "beyond"
During Ramadan, about 60 families/individuals used the "30 Days Prayer Focus Booklets"

6. Mission Focus

Brief "Mission Spots" including reports from people going on or returning from mission trips; Stuart Hawkins reporting on Kairos Prison Ministry; Encouraging people to use the "30 Days" Booklets; Vivian Bleby speaking on the work of BCA

June: Podmores Home Assignment week of Ministry

September: CMS Southern Highlands Dinner: Organized by SH CMS Committee and included meeting the Haddon Family, our new CMS Link Missionaries with Gary preaching the next day

October: Brief (and sad) farewell to the Whitten Family (now working at a Christian Camp near Canberra) CMS Southern Highlands Spring Dinner when we met our new CMS Link Missionaries: Gary and Julie, Katrina, Mikayla, Annika, and Elissa Haddon with Gary preaching the next day.

November: Church Family Asian inner. 2013 Mission Team reported on their January ministry in Manila. At both the dinner and the Sunday services Canon Peter (Federal Secretary of CMS) and Marcelle Rodgers, challenged both adults and younger folk to be involved in mission.

7. Other CMS Activities

A small group of people went to the CMS Winter Luncheon in Moss Vale.

In January over 20 people from MAC attended CMS Summer School at Katoomba.

Coralie F Joyce, Co-ordinator MSG
March 2014