



Grapevine

Volume 2 Issue 4

September 2009

Inside this issue:

Vision Update	1
From Gavin's Desk	2
Chibobo	3
Guide to Chibobo	5
Talking about prayer	6
Praying together	8

Our Vision - Vision Update *By Lesley McInerney*

By the end of 2012, St Mary's will be growing followers of Christ through an integrated discipleship and training pathway and through the planting of a new congregation.

Different planning groups have been working for over a year on the development of this Vision for St Mary's. The pathway for our young disciples has already been mapped out with Prayer and Praise with Preschoolers, God's Gang for preschool and primary school age children, and Youth United for secondary school students. Earlier this month Vestry met to consider a number of reports with recommendations on the discipleship and training pathway for adults.

Home groups and worship services remain at the core of the discipleship pathway. The purpose of home groups is to be the primary place in Parish life where individuals:

- Grow in their relationship with God and each other through Bible study, prayer and fellowship;
- Receive pastoral care;
- Discern their spiritual gifts;
- Grow in their capacity and desire to witness and outreach to the local community and beyond, where they may serve either together or as individuals; and
- Have fun.

New Christians

The information pack for new Christians has been reintroduced and was given out at the *Back to Church Sunday* on 13 September. The pack includes:

- A letter of greeting from Gavin
- Christianity – A pocket guide
- Why Jesus? By Nicky Gumbel
- Communication card
- Welcome to St Mary's brochure
- Copy of the Grapevine

The key strategy for helping new Christians along the discipleship pathway is for mature Christians to befriend them and nurture them in a mentoring relationship. We will be exploring this further with home group and other leaders, and seeking to identify suitable people to be mentors.

Other Initiatives

A substantial proportion of our church members are

not in a home group, some because they find the regular commitment of time too daunting. Next year we will be introducing an annual short term study for these people, possibly at Lent. We also plan to have a retreat or Quiet Day once a year on a Saturday. The Mothers Union holds regular Quiet Days, but these are held on weekdays and many people, especially men and those who work, may not be able to attend these.

Pathways to Ministry and Leadership

The Growing Leaders course will continue to be used as a primary method of training and equipping parishioners for leadership, with the next course planned for 2011. But for most people Growing Leaders is towards the end of the pathway to ministry or leadership, and may not be suitable for all people.

A pathway has been mapped out towards ministry and leadership, incorporating the following steps.

- Stewardship of small things. Current leaders will be asked to identify specific tasks that can be delegated to others over a specific period.
- Attendance at outside courses and events.
- A Gifts and Skills register will be developed.
- A pool of potential leaders will be identified from participants in the Growing Leaders course, by existing leaders, and using the Gifts and Skills Register.
- An annual forum will be held for potential leaders in order to explain different leadership roles.
- Induction programs will be run for new leaders.
- Mentoring will be a key part of the process of growing new leaders.

Home groups will have a special role to play.

- Home group leaders to encourage potential leaders, asking them to undertake small tasks such as opening, participating in or leading prayer and discussions on study topics, even assisting in leading a planned session, all help to build on potential leadership skills.
- A training pathway has been mapped out for potential home group leaders. Ideally it will incorporate both formal courses and mentoring by an experienced home group leader.
- Each home group will be asked to lead at least part of a worship service each year.

These are just some of the things that are planned.

Work is continuing on the details of how we will carry out these tasks. So watch this space for more updates.



St. Mary's Anglican Church Sunbury



From Gavins Desk

Well the footy season is over now and congratulations to the Premiers.....but football is only a small component of life – of what is really happening. Since the last Grapevine, we've taken some significant steps towards our Vision implementation (see separate article) and we are also moving closer towards a relationship with a local Primary School for our service under World Vision's Kids Hope Program.

We've also had a great sermon series on "Journey to Jesus" and I trust that if you missed any of the series (as I did while away in Zambia) you have taken the same opportunity I took to listen to the missed ones on our website.

Our services on "Back to Church" Sunday were great and the Wednesday service has visited Goonawarra Gardens again, this time for a football themed service. Those who attend the 8.30am service were treated to Mike Lampard's Home Group leading it on 6 September, taking roles in all aspects of the service. It was great to experience a Home Group ministering to us. I encourage other Home Groups to consider doing this also.

Visit to Chibobo Orphanage in Zambia – August 2009

Vicki and I spent over a week in Chibobo in late August where I conducted Biblical Leadership Training (on behalf of Help Ministries Projects who run the orphanage). The week's training had been organised by the leaders of local churches and there were over 50 participants consisting of pastors, elders, deacons and leaders from 10 different churches. 3 Deacons rode their bikes for 10 hours from a very remote part of Zambia to come to the course!!! My week of teaching included 2 days of Bible Overview using material I use for the Hitchiker's Guide to the Bible (which I am running again in the Parish House on Saturday 24 October). The final 3 days focused on teaching from *1 Timothy*, specifically focusing on God's call and standards for all in leadership. There were regular opportunities for the participants to break into smaller

groups, to share their testimonies with one another, to pray together and to discuss questions together. At the conclusion of the course I presented each participant with a certificate. For many of these people it was the first time they had graduated at anything so they all came dressed in their best clothes. It was very moving.

In addition to the training I conducted, Vicki and I were able to spend time with specific leaders at the orphanage, encouraging them and praying with them. While in Lusaka, we also met a couple from the USA who were on a mission to distribute as many Study Bibles as they could to pastors and teachers in rural and remote parts of Africa – to encourage them and to help them with their teaching, preaching and study of God's Word. It was God's planning that we met this couple and we have been able to organise for 43 of the local church leaders in Chibobo to receive these and also passed this information onto other church leaders in Zambia who care for rural pastors and congregations. It's always amazing to see God at work in these ways.

We are gathering a great team together to travel to Chibobo Orphanage in 2010, with their specific request for us to plaster, paint and decorate their church. Of course playing with the orphans and helping out with Koala Club and other activities will also be part of the program.

I made it very clear at Chibobo that Vicki and I were only able to be there through the graciousness and generosity of the St Mary's family – with prayerful and practical support. Thank you for your prayers and allowing us the time to represent you in Chibobo. You were all very much part of our ministry of encouragement to God's people and the community of Chibobo, and we thank you and thank God for his grace.

With God's blessings

Gavin

"Our services on Back to Church Sunday were great"

"We are gathering a great team together to travel to Chibobo Orphanage in 2010"

CHIBOBO TRIP – 2009 *by Gill Garth and Phil Stacy*

On July 23rd 2009 Phil Stacy, Warren Mills, Ken and Gill Garth left for Chibobo. The aim of this trip was to assist with maintenance at the Chibobo orphanage, and to establish the possibility of setting up a mechanics workshop in Serenje in the future. We flew into Ndola, a large city in the north east of Zambia and not far from the large mining area. We were fortunate enough to stay at MMM (Mobile Mission Maintenance) and were able to meet with various people and see what type of training programs they run. This ranged from tailoring, brick making, general maintenance, and woodwork, to literacy courses and various outreach programs. Not far away was MFA (Mechanics for Africa), another training school. It was a great pleasure to meet up with John Chilangwa who is being sponsored by Mechanics for Chibobo/Serenje.

“As God’s people we are called to respond”

“We rejoice in having shared this time with them; the blessing they have been to us and the blessing they will now be to the new communities they are now part of”



Phil, John Chilangwa, Ken and Warren

Apparently he is doing very well and proudly showed us his last semester’s report. We were able to see first hand the school where he is being trained as a vehicle mechanic and were introduced to Charlie Watt the founding director.

After two days Staivous picked us up and drove us to Chibobo. It was an exciting feeling to once again enter the familiar grounds of the orphanage and be met by 60 orphans singing a welcome song to us. We remembered many of the orphans from the last time we visited, and there were lots of hugs from the carers. We also caught up with Joshua which was an absolute delight.

We spent a weekend in Serenje to have a meeting with the directors of the Serenje and Chibobo Orphanages to discuss the proposed mechanics workshop in Serenje. The workshop will be a joint venture between the two orphanages, owned and managed by them with the profits being split between them. It will have a local Zambian board of management which will be assisted by an overseas board of management consisting of people from Melbourne and Europe.

We were also fortunate to be there at a time when the Serenje local government was releasing land at a minimal cost. If the application goes through okay in September,

CHIBOBO TRIP – 2009 *by Gill Garth and Phil Stacy—cont.*

Maintenance has expressed an interest in building it. Kevin Gilbert (Serenje) has agreed to try to obtain grants for the construction costs while the Mechanics for Chibobo team in Melbourne will supply the equipment.

Back at Chibobo the maintenance program was well underway with many bikes being repaired. Bicycles are their only means of transport and with the dust, bumpy roads and poor maintenance the men had their work cut out for them. Some of the inner tubes had been repaired so many times it was hard to distinguish what was tube and what was a patch!

The tractor, Hilux Ute and generator were all overhauled, but sadly the equipment we shipped in March didn't arrive so many of the filters, tools etc were unable to be used. The guys were able to teach some of the carers bike maintenance and set up a regular program for them. By then John Chilangwa was on holiday from MFA and it was great to see him getting involved in the maintenance of the vehicles. He is a quiet, unassuming boy but works hard and will be a great asset to the community once he is trained.

The Koala Club started in 2008 to teach the carers how to knit and sew has gone from strength to strength and now has grown from 9 to 24. Some of the ladies walk up to 10 km to attend and many come with babies on their backs. It was truly inspirational to talk and work alongside these enthusiastic ladies. They proudly showed Gill all the "goodies" they had made over the year, including school uniforms for the orphans and

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many hats and scarves. Over the next few days we had classes every day and you should have seen their faces when Gill opened up the suitcase of donated sewing equipment that she had bought over from Australia! Up until this time they had been working for a year with only one pair of scissors. Now each lady was presented with their own sewing kit containing scissors, pins, needles, cotton, tape measure and elastic. There were grins from ear to ear!

them for us with the profits going back to the Koala Club.

From money donated, Gill was able to purchase African “chitenges” material, the type they use for wrap skirts, and showed them how to make simple bags and placemats. These have been brought back, and Just Planet in O’Shanassy Street has agreed to sell them for us with the profits going back to the Koala Club.



A Brief Guide to Chibobo

Chibobo is a small community in northern Zambia. The nearest town is Serenje, 23 kilometres away.

Chibobo Orphanage is run by Help Ministries Projects (HMP).

St Mary’s ran a mission trip to Chibobo orphanage in June 2008.

Koala Club was formed when the mission team taught local people to sew, to knit and other crafts.

Mechanics for Chibobo/ Serenje is a “Project” fully sponsored by St Mary’s and other supporters and was formed when the St Mary’s mission team identified a problem with the lack of maintenance of vehicles and equipment. It aims to train local people and provide locally Orphanage owned facilities for self sustaining professional maintenance of vehicles in the Serenje area.

John Chilangwa, a young man from Chibobo, commenced a 2 year mechanic training course in January this year, sponsored by Mechanics for Chibobo/ Serenje.

Joshua Chibuye is a Chibobo teenager who was brought to Australia in 2008 for corrective surgery on his club feet, organised by Moira Kelly’s Children First Foundation.

Staivous Mulumba is a 25 year old Zambian man who is effectively the CEO of HMP and manages the orphanage in Chibobo.

Talking about about Prayer *By Lesley McInerney*

Connecting with God through prayer is a joy and a privilege. But most Christians find prayer hard, even in private. Many find praying aloud in a group even harder.

In July, as part of our work on developing our Vision for growing followers of Christ, we held an open forum on prayer. Thirty people attended and shared their thoughts, their habits, and their ideas. Some of these have been appearing in the pew sheet each week.

We talked about prayer as communication with God, connecting with God, talking to someone we have a relationship with.

Quiet Time with God

We discussed the importance of a regular quiet time with God, a daily structured prayer time as well as the “arrow” prayers, the personal and passionate prayers we make throughout the day as we are confronted by different situations. Most agreed that shutting oneself off and having formal prayer time is more satisfying than random, “disorganised” prayer.

As prayer is talking to someone we have a relationship with, we should afford to God the same, or greater, courtesy in that conversation as we would with a friend. With a friend we would start a conversation with a greeting, an acknowledgement, perhaps a “how are you today.” Similarly we should acknowledge God with praise, and perhaps with hymns and psalms. We should remember to tell him that we love him.

As Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.* (NIV). We should remember to give thanks to God for his goodness and bounty, and for answered prayers. Keeping a prayer diary can help to remind us of the prayers he has answered. Our prayer includes intercession for others, and personal prayer for our own needs. Scripture teaches us that it is OK to complain to God. The Book of Lamentations, the Psalms, and the Book of Job all show times when faithful followers of the Lord felt driven to lament their woes.

An important part of the daily Quiet Time with God is the Quiet, the silence, the waiting on God and listening. Conversation is a two way process, we have to allow God his time to speak. Also just being silent is part of connecting with God.

Prayer Habits

Different people have different prayer habits. Some spoke of the importance of prayer time first thing in the morning in preparation for the day ahead. For others, random prayers during the day are followed by a longer conversation at night. Some have a formal quiet time and study over the Bible at night. We agreed on the need to seek God’s guidance daily. We also agreed on the need to come to God having forgiven those we feel have sinned against us.

Prayer can be persistent, regularly asking for the same thing, but not repetitive, repeating the same phrases over and over again. As Jesus said, *“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”* (Matthew 6:7 NIV). But in the Parable of the Persistent Widow *“Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”* (Luke 18:1-8 NIV).

“Quiet Time
with God”

We talked of the physical aspects of prayer – sitting, standing, kneeling or walking. The message is do whatever you are comfortable with, and whatever helps you to keep your focus on God.

Prayer Opportunities for Busy People

Time is a precious commodity for many people, with demands of work and family. I remember getting up at 5.30am to do all that needed to be done before rushing off to catch the 7.40am train to work.

Some ideas for prayer time included –

- Prayer time in the shower (as practised by John Stott)
- Prayer in the car
- Prayer in the train
- Prayer when walking

In this age of the iPod and hands free mobile phones, no-one thinks you're mad if you appear to be talking to yourself! On the train you can close your eyes and people think you're asleep.

Mothers with small children find it especially hard to find a quiet time. Prayer in songs and hymns can be used to praise God. Scripture in song is a great way to memorise Scripture and at the same time teach your children. It is important to model prayer practices with our children. Also, some more mature ladies uttered the comforting words – this time will pass.

Challenges

Distractions and a wandering mind are challenges for most of us. When sitting still with eyes closed the mind can wander. Physical solutions discussed included prayer while standing or walking, or using other physical actions to give praise to our Lord. A mental solution is to put the distracting thought in a mental boat and watch it sail away. In public worship, especially when using the Prayer Book, people sometimes find they do not have enough time to reflect on the words. Service leaders use expression in the voice and periods of silence to try to overcome this.

It can also be difficult to pray with passion for someone you do not know, or whose circumstances you do not know. In these cases we lift them to the Lord, trusting in his infinite knowledge and mercy. Generally we should try to be specific in our prayer; how else will we know if our prayers are answered? But sometimes we do not know enough and must trust in God's grace to do what is best.

Finally, we all go through desert times when we feel God is not there. But rest assured he is with us, and the time will return when we feel the blessing of his presence.

**“Children are
important to
God”**

The Grapevine

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Contributions to this publication are most welcome and can either be emailed to Lesley McInerney or left in her box in the church hall.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Anglican church, and only reflect the views of the contributors or editorial staff.

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Praying Together

By Lesley McInerney

Have you ever thought of joining a prayer partnership or prayer triplet? At the Prayer Forum in July there was a great deal of interest in prayer partnerships and triplets to encourage the depth of our prayer lives and keep us accountable.

A number of people have been in prayer groups, from partnerships of two to as many as four, and have found them a wonderful experience with very strong friendships developing from them. A firm commitment is made to meet at a regular time, say once a month, and to treat it as a priority engagement, not to be postponed or changed other than for very pressing reasons. Often members meet beforehand for a chat over coffee or a meal, followed by an hour of prayer. The focus may be the needs and issues facing the members of the group. It may be just one issue. It may be prayer for non-Christians known to group members. Each group makes its own decisions on how it will conduct its prayer, but all observe total confidentiality about their discussions and prayers.

Triplets have advantages over partnerships in that if someone is unable to make it due to ill health or being away, two people still meet and the group is not in danger of fizzle

out. They keep each other accountable. Triplets are generally formed by two people forming a partnership and praying for God to reveal a third person to be approached.

Some of our Mothers' Union members shared their experiences of being allocated prayer partners by their organisation. Unexpected partnerships worked surprisingly well.

Prayer in Home Groups

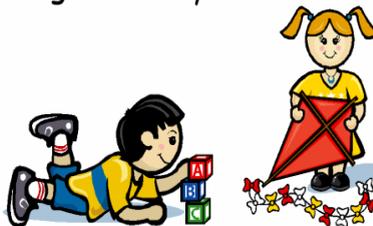
Home groups are often the first place in which people learn to pray aloud in a group setting. Members are all encouraged to pray, and some find it more difficult than others. Sometimes it is helpful to break into smaller groups if the whole group is too large.

Prayer in home groups is often based on the needs of the group, its members and their friends and families. To encourage other prayer, alphabet praying has been trialled in one group, with the leader each week choosing a word (eg A for Attributes of God) to be the subject of prayer. Another group prays through the monthly prayer points inserted in the pew sheet.

St. Mary's Playgroup

Held each Tuesday morning during the school term.

Open to all children aged 0 - 5 years and their parents/carers



Held in the Parish Hall.

A full range of toys and activities are provided.

For further information contact Ros Armstrong.



St. Mary's Anglican
Church Sunbury