

Weekly Newsletter: 20th December 2022

Reflection: Christmas at HEC

By Joe Barnard

Keeping the Missional Momentum

I hope everyone is still buzzing from the two carol services last week. Each was such a blessing, both in terms of the number of people who attended and the joy and love felt on each night. Let's be praying that the seed sown through these evenings will produce fruit in the weeks, months, and years ahead.

If we are honest, sometimes it can be a bit discouraging to see a crowd of new faces at an event, but then not to see a few of the same faces on subsequent Sunday mornings. Don't be surprised by such absence. We need to be realistic about the challenge of evangelism in a secular society. In most cases, there will be a long process of making contact and earning trust before an unchurched person feels comfortable to show up on a Sunday morning. One missional event will not be enough to change an indifferent sceptic into an inquiring seeker. We need to have the same patience in mission that a gardener has when preparing vegetable beds. A single day of sowing seed will not result in a harvest. It will only be through a repeated effort of digging, watering, and weeding that eventually we see the signs of new life beginning to emerge.

I say this not to quench the excitement of the previous week, but to encourage us to keep up the good work as we turn the corner of 2023. There is every reason to believe that God is doing a 'new thing' (Is. 43) among us. As we enter a New Year, let's recommit ourselves to the task of being a community on mission together.

The Christmas Appeal

We are still in the midst of the Christmas Appeal. Last week I shared a little information regarding two of the ministries we will be supporting. I want to use the remainder of this letter to raise awareness regarding the other two.

European Mission Fellowship

Many of us have felt the cold over the last couple of weeks. This was a providential opportunity to sympathise with the plight of people in Ukraine who will be experiencing a winter that is unlike anything we can imagine. In view of this, we are partnering with the EMF to assist with some of the needs in Ukraine. The EMF has a project to raise £50,000 for 2,000 Bibles and blankets and 20 generators. Every £15 will get a Bible and a blanket to someone in Ukraine. Generators will create warm places for people to gather. Each medium sized generator costs about £1,000.

Let's be inspired to give generously as we think of this opportunity to provide both spiritual nourishment and physical comfort to people who are trapped in the horrific conditions of a protracted war.

Queensland Theological College

Like Scotland, Australia is a country where religious adherence is declining. Secularism is making inroads both within the politics of the country as well as within the mainstream denominations. This makes evangelical witness all the more important. Gospel workers need to be trained up and sent out to help reevangelise a country that is drifting toward the darkness of moral relativism.

Many of us have been praying for Queensland Theological College over the last year. Due to financial issues in their denomination (the Presbyterian Church of Queensland), they have needed to raise around \$8 million to buy (back) their own building to enable ministry to continue. The funds needed have been raised through donations, fund raising and taking out a number of loans. Our contribution will help them to pay off some of their loans.

Let's keep the big picture in view as we support the work of this important training base for evangelical ministry in Australia. In partnering with QTC we are ultimately investing in the reevangelisation of Australia. What a privilege to be able to contribute something to such an important gospel effort!

The current total stands at £7335. If you would like to contribute to the Christmas Appeal, you can do this by bank transfer or cheque in the offering box. Please mark your gift as 'Christmas Appeal'. Thank you!

Christmas Plans and Holidays

Here's what is happening over the next couple of weeks –

- We are looking forward to gathering on Christmas Day for a time of family worship at 10.30am. There will be no creche or Sunday Club and no evening service or home groups meeting.
- There will be no prayer meeting on Wednesday 28th December. Our first prayer meeting will be on Wednesday 4th January
- We'll gather for worship on Sunday 1st January at 10.30am. There will be no evening service or Equip.
- Our home groups begin for the new year on Sunday 8th January and will continue to meet on 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

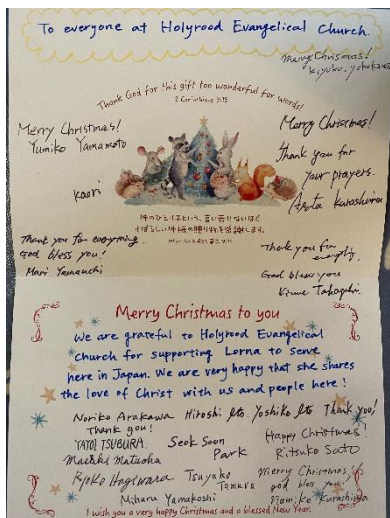
Liz will be on holiday from Monday 26th December until Monday 2nd January. There will be no newsletter or prayer bulletin that week.

Joe will be on holiday from Monday 2nd until Sunday 8th January. We're delighted that David Meredith will be preaching for us on Sunday 8th.

For any urgent pastoral matters when Joe is away, please contact an elder or member of the Pastoral Care Team (Maureen Gowans, Elaine Harley, Alison Nelson, Alasdair Roberts or Liz Scott).

Lorna and a Christmas Card from Japan

It was a privilege to have Lorna (with Matthew, Calum and Jordan) worshipping with us yesterday. We were able to mark 25 years since she first went to Japan.



Lorna delivered a Christmas card from her church in Japan (Masago Baptist Church) to everyone at Holyrood.

It says 'Merry Christmas to you. We are grateful to Holyrood Evangelical Church for supporting Lorna to serve here in Japan. We are very happy that she shares the love of Christ with us and people here.'

It's signed by members of the church family in Japan and will be up on the church notice board in the foyer.



Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm on Zoom
- Sunday: Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.



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