

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER – 12MAR25

Dear brothers and sister in Christ

How are you today? I am thankful for the many ways God is blessing us as his church so that we might live for him and declare Christ.

Today we continue reflecting on the Congregation Snapshot considering Evangelism and Outreach, before moving onto church matters.

ENCOURAGEMENT: What We Need To Work On - Evangelism and Outreach

We are considering our Congregation Snapshot over the next number of weeks looking at what we value, what we are doing well and what we need to work on. Today we talk about “Evangelism and Outreach”.

Are we a church that is reaching out into the community around us? When we consider our church, I can only pinpoint three activities that regularly engage with non-Christians beyond the church: SRE, Stakz, Kids Holiday Club, Sewing 101 and the Community Pantry. More than half of these are kids ministry. It is recognized that we need to be more intentional in how we share Christ with those beyond our church.

What does it mean to be a church that reaches out to those around us? The Great Commission says, “Go and make disciples...” (Matthew 28:19), which tells us we need to be going. Much of what we do as a church involves expecting people to come to us. SRE is the only activity we do where we “go” to where people are. Even when we had the Fete, the community engagement we had expected others to come to us. We need to consider how we can “go” to where non-Christians are, and be present in their spaces. Join groups like sporting teams and hobby clubs. Set up a stall at festivals or by the river walk. Talk to people down the street and in shopping centres. Be a contributor to online community groups.

There is an intentionality to the Great Commission too: “Make disciples...” It is a challenge to move beyond small talk to speak about God, Christ and issues of spiritual weight. The very word “evangelise” means to announce good news, so

evangelism has only happened once someone has heard the good news of Jesus and the call to repent and believe in him. It brings to mind what Jesus was saying before he began his ministry: “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15).

Thinking about going and being intentional can take many out of our comfort zone. We can feel uncomfortable moving beyond what we know. We feel we are not able to speak Christ clearly and worry we might say the wrong thing. Some of the reason we feel uncomfortable is that we think we are on our own to talk to others about Jesus. This need not be the case. We can picture evangelism as a team effort – it is not up to each individual alone, but to the church as a whole. There are a number of ways we can together evangelise. Let me give a few points:

- Church gives us a place we can invite friends to hear the gospel. We might not be confident to share Jesus ourselves but we can invite people to come and hear the gospel at church, whether it be a worship service or another event with a gospel message.
- We can find some others at church and together join a community group with the intention of sharing Jesus with those people through the relationships we build.
- Church is a place we can learn evangelism. In Ephesians, Paul talks about evangelists whom God gives to the church to prepare God’s people for works of service (Ephesians 4:11-12). Having the gift of evangelism is not just about being able to share Jesus with others, but also to train and equip God’s people to share Jesus too. So when training is offered in sharing Jesus, take the opportunity to grow and be equipped.
- As church we should take our cue from Jesus in how we enable one another to evangelise. Jesus did not just tell his disciples how to do evangelism and then expect them to go and do it on their own. He drew alongside them to coach them in speaking the good news.
 - First, he **explains** how to speak the good news. We see him do this when he sends his disciples out two by two to tell the gospel.
 - Second he **demonstrates** what speaking the good news looks like. His disciples were with him watching as he preached to crowds and spoke with individuals. Watching him they learned.
 - Third he sent them out under his **supervision**, talking with them about their experiences and helping them to grow.

- Fourth, after his resurrection he sends them

So it follows the acronym EDSA – Explain, Demonstrate, Supervise, Apply. We explain how to share Jesus, we demonstrate how to do it by taking others with us to watch as we share Jesus, we then go with them to supervise as they share the gospel, then once they have the hang of it – we send them out to apply it.

Lastly, it is important to know that God does not leave us alone to share Jesus but his Spirit is present with us (Acts 1:8) to share Jesus with others and help us speak the words people need to hear. How will we share Jesus as God's church here in Penrith? How do you need to grow in the way you share Jesus?

WANT TO JOIN A BIBLE STUDY

If you are wanting a Bible Study that meets earlier in the evening, from 5.30-7.30pm on a Wednesday. there are some members looking for interested people. Let me know if you would like more information.

SERVING THE CHURCH: Public Bible Reading

This year once a month, our training seminars will be equipping us to serve God's church in various ways. Our next night will be on Tuesday 25th March on Public Bible Reading. We will consider how to read the Bible in church and other public settings including how to prepare beforehand, tips for how to speak clearly, how to deal with tricky Bible names that are hard to pronounce and spending time practicing with one another.

FINAL COMMENTS

Have you seen these? A Youtube creator is using Lego to tell the true stories of the Bible: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wufg5iYHNT4>

As always, love and prayers,
Steve