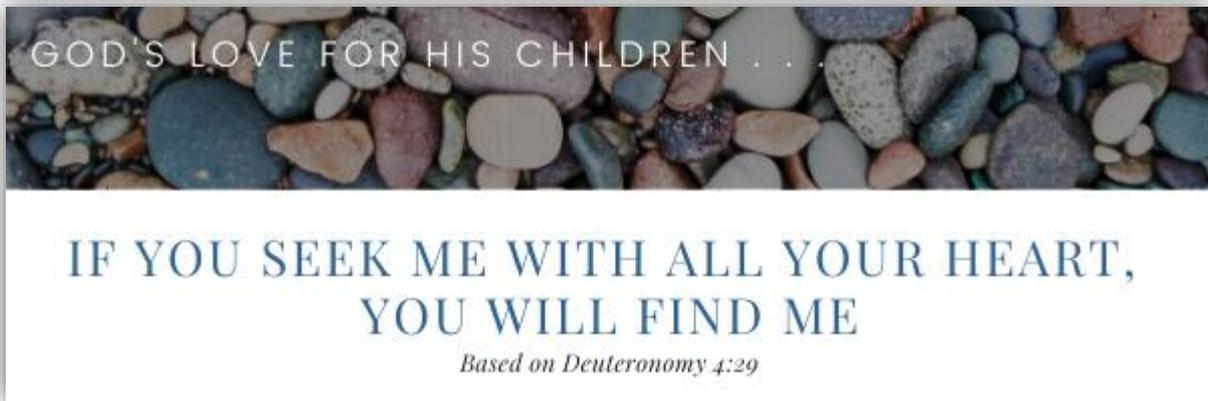


June 2021, No.1 1

S T E P B Y S T E P  
**ADVANCE**  
Tasmanian  
**BAPTISTS** 



MAY 20, 2021

WELCOME to the first instalment of the June 2021 edition of ADVANCE | step by step

There's so much good reading to catch up on this time . . .

- *Q&A Interview with Paul Manning* - the new Baptist Word Aid Tas/Vic rep
- *An overview of the May Assembly* from a first-timer, Stephen Avery (City Baptist)
- *How your church can benefit* from running Alpha.
- NEWS - There's lots going on!  
*Religious Freedom Weekend | Training Day for TaCCs | TWO Online Baptist Conferences*

Be blessed this week,

*Jenny*



**Jenny Baxter**  
Communications Manager, Tasmanian Baptists  
[jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au)

**What good work has God done in your life lately?  
Or in the life of your church or community?**

If you have a great story to tell, please connect with me. I'd love to hear what's going on.

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<sup>1</sup> [tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021/tas-baptist-news-june-2021](https://tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021/tas-baptist-news-june-2021)

report:

## Bringing Heaven to Earth

By Stephen Avery



**Entering the Baptist Assembly** for the first time I had no expectation. I had heard it was full of politics and arguments, but it's different now. How different wasn't clear.

Booking in was easy, just a phone call to friendly staff. My wife, Tracey, is gluten free, dairy free, soy free, egg free and peanut free but that didn't seem to faze them. We booked for the dinner, why not, and the Saturday session.

**Friday night came.** Tracey and I drove out to Riverlands Church to find a smaller gathering of people than I expected for the opening of Assembly. Later, I realised people were coming from all over the state, so finding accommodation, or the cost of it, was a thing to consider.

That said, the dinner was amazing, and the caterers had all Tracey's food exceptions catered for. (Thanks heaps if you are reading this.)



*Pictured: The people gathered on Saturday*

Jeff McKinnon gave the opening speech, which as always was straight from the heart, full of vision and hope (I'm biased!) Although we were not known by most, Tracey and I felt we belonged.

**Saturday Assembly also felt welcoming.** We got to talk face-to-face with others we had only spoken to on the phone or emailed, and Tracey caught up with brothers and sisters she hadn't seen forever.

The formal aspect of Assembly that morning was short and to the point.

Then there was a section of grand vision, which had something to do with community, worship and mission being required for us to be God's church, and *Reengage | Reimagine | Realign*. These are elements which I'm sure will be fleshed out in the coming year.

**What really stood out** were the individual stories of what's already taking place. A number from different churches shared their journey of listening to God and change.

These stories were of hope that we can listen, God does speak, and He hasn't left us to remain the same. That when we set our focus as a community on Him, he is faithful. He maybe not as quick to respond as we would like (no real fleece moments), but he gives gradual guidance, enough for each step of the way, without over-loading us with heaps of detail.

**Other highlights** were hearing how *Michael Henderson* and *Jenna Blackwell* would love to support church members in reaching their full potential of what God would like to do in their neighbourhood.

Overall, our first Baptist Assembly was interesting, a great way for us to meet new brothers and sisters and catch up with others, and find out how God is slowly bringing heaven to earth.

*Stephen and Tracey Avery attend City Baptist Church, Launceston*

news:

## Save the Date!

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EmpowHer (Tasmanian Baptist Women) Southern Walk

Saturday Morning, June 19, South Arm

More details coming soon.

## Religious Freedom Weekend, 11-13 June 2021

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Resources are available for churches to use!

Conducted by [Freedom for Faith](#)<sup>2</sup>

### Join with Churches and Faith Communities across Australia to Pray for and Protect Religious Freedom

Faith groups across the nation will be praying for the globally persecuted and the protection of religious freedoms in Australia. Religious Freedom is only weakly protected in Australian law, and those protections are rapidly eroding.

**Download:** [Resources Pack](#)<sup>3</sup> for Churches

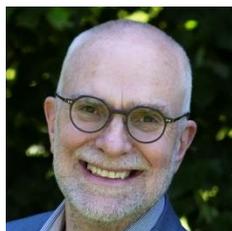
**Visit:** [Religious Freedom Weekend >>>](#)<sup>4</sup>

## Let your Light Shine

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Free training day for leadership teams of our Town and Country Churches

*An important message from our **Mission Director, Stephen Baxter***



There is a special training day planned to support and encourage our Town and Country Churches (TaCCs). These are a special and unique set of churches in our Union who serve in rural settings across our State. TaCC leadership teams are invited to another special time together.

This is an opportunity to meet with leaders of churches facing similar challenges and needs. TaCC teams will be able to communicate, and be heard by, myself and Jeff McKinnon.

***The Training Day is open to all, pastors, church leaders, and those in your TaCC who would like to attend. It would be great if every TaCC is represented.***

It will be a great day together!

DETAILS: [Let Your Light Shine Training Day](#)

**WHERE:** Latrobe Baptist Church, 123 Gilbert Street, Latrobe

**WHEN:** 10am-2.30pm Saturday 26 June

**THEME:** Let Your Light Shine: Taking the Gospel to your community

**TRAINERS:** Stephen Baxter and Jeff McKinnon

**WHO:** This event is open to all leaders of Town and Country Churches

**COST:** Free, including refreshments and lunch

**RSVP:** Karen Buckney [karen@riverlands.org.au](mailto:karen@riverlands.org.au) by Friday 18 June, 2021

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<sup>2</sup> [freedomforfaith.org.au](http://freedomforfaith.org.au)

<sup>3</sup> [tasbaptists.org.au/clients/tasbaptists/downloads/religious\\_freedom\\_weekend\\_resources\\_pack.pdf](http://tasbaptists.org.au/clients/tasbaptists/downloads/religious_freedom_weekend_resources_pack.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [religiousfreedomweekend.com.au](http://religiousfreedomweekend.com.au)

## Baptists in Mission Conference, 5-7 July 2021

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Online at [regional hubs](#)

**This will be a great event and you are encouraged to attend!**

*A collaboration between Crossover Australia and Global Interaction*

This conference is about the mission of God, and the mission of God is at the core of our Australian Baptist identity.

**WHO IS IT FOR?** Pastors, leadership teams, and emerging leaders

[Program >>>](#)<sup>5</sup> Every afternoon, 2 to 6:30pm each day, 5-7 July

[Register >>>](#)<sup>6</sup> \$75 (Earlybird before 10 May: \$67.50)

[Regional Hubs >>>](#)<sup>7</sup>

SOUTH Citywide Mornington | NORTH Riverlands Longford | NORTH WEST LifeWay Devonport

[Find out more >>>](#)<sup>8</sup> Great speakers - Be inspired!

[Watch the Video >>>](#)<sup>9</sup> [vimeo.com/523655507](https://vimeo.com/523655507)



## "Together" Online Conference, 7-10 July 2021

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The Baptist World Alliance invites you to attend the 22<sup>nd</sup> Baptist World Congress.

Held every five years, the 2020 Baptist World Congress, originally planned to take place in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

The big news is that the postponed Congress will be available for online for Baptists to attend globally, with free entry for Australians!

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<sup>5</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au/program](https://baptistsinmission.org.au/program)

<sup>6</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au/product/baptists-in-mission](https://baptistsinmission.org.au/product/baptists-in-mission)

<sup>7</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au/states/tas](https://baptistsinmission.org.au/states/tas)

<sup>8</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au](https://baptistsinmission.org.au)

<sup>9</sup> [vimeo.com/523655507](https://vimeo.com/523655507)

[WATCH:](#)<sup>10</sup>

A Special Update for Australian Baptists from the General Secretary Dr Elijah Brown, Baptist World Alliance, with news for Aussies about attending.



"We are called **together** to God's global mission."

Elijah Brown

FIND OUT MORE:

**TOGETHER**, [22<sup>nd</sup> Baptist World Congress](#)<sup>11</sup>, July 7-10

**Free For Aussies!** [REGISTER HERE >>>](#)<sup>12</sup> A code is available to access the freebie.

Please contact Karen Buckney to get the code: [karen@riverlands.org.au](mailto:karen@riverlands.org.au) ... Or 6391 2202 9am-1pm Mon-Fri.

**The US\$70 registration is being made available to Australians, which includes:**

- Access to the entire 2021 Virtual Congress Experience
- 1 Pre-Conference (Wed July 7) Registration for either [Global Conference of Baptist Women](#)<sup>13</sup> or [Religious Freedom Summit](#)<sup>14</sup>
- 7 Days of on-demand Congress content access to enhance your ministry engagement and ministry collaboration.

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<sup>10</sup> [vimeo.com/523655507](https://vimeo.com/523655507)

<sup>11</sup> [bwa2021.org](https://bwa2021.org)

<sup>12</sup> [bwa2021.org/register](https://bwa2021.org/register)

<sup>13</sup> [bwa2021.org/global-conference-of-baptist-women](https://bwa2021.org/global-conference-of-baptist-women)

<sup>14</sup> [bwa2021.org/together-with-the-persecuted](https://bwa2021.org/together-with-the-persecuted)

interview:

## Get to Know Paul Manning

### Baptist World Aid, Tas/Vic



Rev. Paul Manning is the new face in Tasmania for [Baptist World Aid](#).

Who is he? Where is he from? What makes him tick?

Read on!

#### Where were you born and what was it like growing up there?

I was born in Sydney, and grew up on the north beaches. It was a 'typical' suburban childhood, which included what seemed like long summer school holidays playing in the backyard pool, or down at the beach; as well as being part of a church community and all activities which come with that.

#### When and why did you move to Victoria?

We moved to Melbourne in 2009 for me to begin pastoral ministry at [Sydenham Baptist Church](#).

#### What do you enjoy most about living there?

Well, all family are now living nearby It takes 25-minutes to get into the city to enjoy all that Melbourne offers. Or 10-minutes, and we're in the country to enjoy all that country Victoria offers. Win-win!

#### Tell us about your family?

I am married to Liz - 32 years in May 2021 - and we have four adult children. James who is a Secondary School Teacher. Jonathan married to Sarah. Micaela who is studying a Master of Psychology. And Joel who is studying a Master of Physiotherapy. We have two grandsons Malachi and John.



*The Manning family are pictured, minus eldest son, James.*

#### How did you become a Christian?

I grew up in a Christian family and community, so I was always aware of God which included who Jesus was, and what He did. I made the decision to follow Jesus in December 1979 and got Baptised in March 1982. From early on I realised that we need Jesus to be Saviour and Lord. He's not just 'a ticket to heaven', which is why I say I'm a follower of Jesus.

#### What is the best piece of advice you have received?

It was from the Bible - Hebrews 13:8 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever' - such reassurance in a world of consent change and insecurity. I also screen shot lots of sayings here's an example "A day without coffee is like... just kidding - I have no idea".

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*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever*  
*Hebrews 13:8*

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### **When people ask you how you spend your time, what do you say?**

I spend time with family, often cooking them lunch or dinner. I spend time doing work for Baptist World Aid Australia. I spend time with friends, often involving eating, drinking and laughing a lot. And I should spend time exercising!

### **Tell us about your role with BWA?**

I began at Baptist World Aid Australia in May 2020 as Church Relationship Manager for Tasmania and Victoria.

A primary focus is to work with Tasmanian Baptist Pastors and Churches within the ministry area of responding to international injustice. In particular, the injustice of poverty, the vulnerable and marginalized. It was great to finally be able to visit Tasmania, to meet face to face at the May Assembly.

*It was great to finally visit Tasmania, to meet face to face at the May Assembly.*

I look forward to partnering in ministry and facilitating transforming partnerships between Tasmanian Baptists and poor, vulnerable communities throughout the world.

### **What excites you most about what you do?**

The most exciting thing about being involved in the work of Baptist World Aid Australia is positively impacting the lives of many people as they experience wholistic transformation within their lives and the communities in which they live.

### **How can we pray for you and your work?**

Pray for connections and opportunities which will allow me to facilitate transforming partnerships.

Pray, too, for the communities where Baptist World Aid Australia are ministering.

## **Short and Sweet**

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**I am looking forward to ...** continuing to be able to travel within Tasmania, Victoria and NSW

**I am worried about ...** being locked away again

**I am confident that ...** Baptist World Aid Australia will increasingly impact the lives of the poor and vulnerable.

**I am joyful about ...** being able to meet face to face with family and friends

**I am at my best when ...** I'm with people drinking coffee.

## **Support the work of BWA**

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[End COVID-19 in India >>><sup>15</sup>](#) | [Order the COVID-edition Ethical Fashion Guide >>><sup>16</sup>](#)

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<sup>15</sup> [baptistworldaid.org.au/appeals/india-covid-emergency-appeal](https://baptistworldaid.org.au/appeals/india-covid-emergency-appeal)

<sup>16</sup> [baptistworldaid.org.au/resources/ethical-fashion-guide](https://baptistworldaid.org.au/resources/ethical-fashion-guide)

discipleship and evangelism:

## Engaging your Community

*Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone had the opportunity to ask questions about life, faith and meaning in a non-threatening friendly environment?*

Alpha Australia has a vision to see 1-million people in Australia do just that!



## What is Alpha?

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Alpha is a series of interactive sessions over several weeks which involve connecting with others, whether that be over a meal or an icebreaker, watching a video about a different aspect of the Christian faith and having time for open discussion. Alpha is for everyone, young and not so young.

It runs in churches, cafes, pubs, schools and prisons all over the world and even online. Alpha Online has made it possible for all people to have the opportunity to hear the Good News of Jesus.



## Tasmanian Baptist experience

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Dan Hutchison, at Citywide Baptist Church in Mornington, has run the **Alpha Youth Series**.



He says "We have used the Alpha Youth series a number of times each having a profound impact on our young people ...The Alpha Youth content has been presented in a very helpful way with our young adults finding it their 'go-to' for wanting to go over the foundations of faith. The first time we went away for the weekend element, we prayed for the Spirit to turn up and one of our young people had an overwhelming sense of joy. At another weekend retreat everyone in the room felt a sense of peace".

He continues, "One time when we did the session on healing we then found out that one of the youth had a brain tumour. The timing of the session, and the content, helped the leaders and youth through that time in praying and seeing a miracle of healing".

Dan also ran **The Marriage Course**

"...we ran the marriage course online with 15 couples. We were one of the first in Tassie to run the new format and it was very well received. This was a great time together during COVID, being able to meet in our own homes really created a safe place for couples to discuss the content in private.

"Delivering the content online really did strengthen peoples' marriages in our church and cultivated community between our couples in this shared experience."

## Have questions?

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To find out more about running **Alpha** or **The Marriage Course** head to our website:

[alpha.org.au](http://alpha.org.au).

Or, contact Anita Booker, one of our local Alpha Church Engagement Team members:

[anita.booker@alpha.org.au](mailto:anita.booker@alpha.org.au)

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June 2021, No. 2<sup>1</sup>

S T E P B Y S T E P  
**ADVANCE**  
Tasmanian  
**BAPTISTS** 

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN . . .



DELIGHT IN ME AND I WILL  
GIVE YOU THE DESIRES  
OF YOUR HEART

*Based on Psalm 37:4*



JUNE 3, 2021

Well, it's winter, and the chill has arrived! But let's keep thanking God for the blessing of our island home.

There's so much good reading to catch up on this time in this instalment of **ADVANCE | step by step ...**

- \* **PROFILE:** Hobart Baptist church
- \* **WELCOME to COUNTRY:** History made at May Assembly
- \* **TESTIMONY:** Ruth Burgess - From Swami to Christian
- \* **NEWS - Don't miss these!** EmpowHer Southern Walk | *NCLS Survey 2021* | COVID-19 Crisis in Asia

Catch you in a fortnight - and stay warm!

*Jenny*



**Jenny Baxter**  
Communications Manager, Tasmanian Baptists  
[jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au)

**What good work has God done in your life lately?  
Or in the life of your church or community?**

If you have a great story to tell, please connect with me. I'd love to hear what's going on.

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<sup>1</sup> [tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021](http://tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021)

our church:

**ADVANCE | step by step** now features a new series of church profiles. This issue it's all about Hobart Baptist Church.

Firstly, read an overview from the Church Secretary, **Heather Galloway**. Then continue scrolling for highlights from church member, **Sonya Ambrose**.



## From the Church Secretary: Heather Galloway

Hi!

My name is Heather, and I am the Secretary of Hobart Baptist Church.



That sounds simple, and I'm sure it would be if admin was my area of expertise, and if our church life was "normal".

Jim and I have been married for nearly 39 years. We are both "retired", have three lovely daughters (pictured), and we've just been blessed with three grandsons in under five months!

I am Tasmanian-born, my parents having emigrated from England post-WWII. I was, to quote the late Graham Clements, "carried into this church as a baby", and have grown up in the church with my family. I was baptised at the age of 20, and have been a member of HBC for 46 years!

I began serving in the church helping my father count the offering. He was Treasurer for five years until I was eight, so I clearly began at an early age! I guess that set the scene, and it's probably not surprising I follow in his footsteps.

### **A tiny taste of heaven!**

Hobart Baptist Church is a city church with a long history of engaging the City of Hobart in many ways. We continue to do so, trusting God, who calls us to serve the people here.

**HOBART'S HISTORY**  
*By Tas Baptist's Historian  
Laurie Rowston*  
A Baptist presence has been in Hobart since 1835 and a chapel was opened in 1840. The present site of 1883 saw at first a temporary structure, then a school hall and finally the Tabernacle of 1889. The church has been marked by long pastorates with leading preachers, including the Rev F.W. Boreham. HBC played an important role in the city with two of its number becoming Lord Mayors. It suffered a setback in 1977 when the collapse of the Tasman Bridge saw the departure of many families who lived on the Eastern Shore and formed Eastern Shore Baptist, now Citywide. Despite this, the church now ministers to the city with several congregations, including the Karen Fellowship and Church with No Walls.

For well over 100 years migrants, and refugees from around the globe, have found welcome and "sanctuary", making HBC their home. We've had an active refugee support team for 40 years, and the current ethnic diversity reflects that care, and a willingness to mirror what Heaven will look like. Joel Ortiz, our Multicultural Pastor supports us in that ministry.



Back in 2014 we took a church photo which shows our diversity. It's probably time for another one!

## HBC in the political arena

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In the past, politicians from all levels of government have been members of HBC. However now, our Senior Pastor Stephen Baxter, as Chair of the Tasmanian Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, can speak into Tasmania's political arena in a different way.

I've discovered the value of having conversations with politicians from all sides of the spectrum.

## HBC and The Arts

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Some years ago, we expressed a desire to engage with the city through the Arts, and that has now begun! Artist-in-Residence Michael Henderson is using Dark Mofo as an opportunity to engage with the city with an art installation during our new *Luminous Festival*. The exhibition is titled *Breathe, Shine and Seek to Mend*. We'd love to see you if you can make it! ([You can REGISTER HERE >>>](#)<sup>2</sup>)

This will create opportunities to have conversations to bring the Light of Jesus into the dark world. This year, our second *Christmas in Winter* will follow the Festival.

## Becoming real: Our redevelopment dream

---

Over my lifetime at HBC there have been many changes, both in terms of the physical building, and the people of the church. For decades there have been dreams of improving the facilities.

Now, as Hobart Baptist nears the end of a substantial building redevelopment, it is easy to see why earlier dreams have not been fulfilled. There has been so much blood, sweat and tears involved! The redevelopment cost nearly \$9m, and was a lot of extra work, and stress, for a small group of people, me included.

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<sup>2</sup> [hobartbaptist.org.au/luminous](http://hobartbaptist.org.au/luminous)



From left: New glass-doored entrance to foyer between "The Tab", and old Soundy Building with doors to the new cafe; The apartments built on the back of the property; Forecourt works underway; New foyer nearly complete!

Why did we do it? We want people to see life in the building! To have facilities the community will find welcoming, thus providing opportunities to have conversations with people who would not normally enter a church building.

We began the redevelopment before Covid-19 changed our lives. Now, more than ever, we need to discern where God is leading us and to trust him. We have to discover the depth and breadth of our current church family, and what God is calling them to do in our new spaces, as we seek to be a prophetic voice in the City of Hobart.

### Moving into the future

We're in for an exciting time. There are so many opportunities right before us. I envisage the church alive through the week - I look forward to meeting friends in our cafe, having conversations, engaging with those around us, reaching out into the community, people coming to know Jesus, and others returning to the fold.

***Where will I fit in? I'm not sure, but God knows. I trust him to give us the strength for the next phase of life of Hobart Baptist Church. Please pray that he will!***

**HOBART'S VALUES**

We Value Life  
~  
We Value Growing  
~  
We Value each other  
~  
We Value our heritage  
~  
We Value our City  
~  
We Value our Future  
~  
We Value Grace

**CONTACT**  
284 Elizabeth St  
HOBART 7000  
info@hobartbaptist.org.au  
hobartbaptist.org.au

### Member Reflection

By Sonya Ambrose

*Sonya Ambrose participates in the Kids' Church ministry and the Music team at Hobart Baptist church. She is the mother of five, and is married to Scott.*



Last year, after several months of online worship, it was exciting to begin meeting together again in "The Tab" and seeing the faces of our wonderfully diverse congregation. In March we celebrated 'Sanctuary Sunday'. We reflected on the way that HBC has long been a refuge for people of many different nationalities.

Our children particularly enjoyed the opportunity to resume Kids' Church. Building developments have necessitated some re-shuffling of kids' activities such as Kids' Church and Boys' Brigade, but the children have enjoyed using our new church hall for active games, singing, dancing and craft activities. Boys' Brigade have temporarily moved to Hobart City Church of Christ, who have graciously accommodated approximately 30-40 energetic boys every Friday evening.

Our family were delighted to participate in several church gatherings over past months. 'Meeting Jesus at the Beach' was a big hit, with beach cricket, swimming, treasure hunt and some wonderfully dramatic and interactive storytelling of the house built upon the rock by our multicultural pastor Joel Ortiz dressed in flowing white robes. (He was "Jesus"!)

More recently, our church families fellowshipped together at Bellerive park for lunch and kids' activities.



Some HBC families "Meeting Jesus at the Beach"

Our HBC family have been observing the building redevelopment with eager anticipation. Whilst it has been a long, and sometimes painful process, we can rejoice that the end is now in sight. We are hopeful that our new facilities will provide exciting new opportunities for connecting with and serving our city.



The Ambrose Family - Scott, Sonya and their children

news:

## EmpowHer Southern Coastal Walk

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EmpowHer (Tasmanian Baptist Women) are organising a walk for Southern women and girls!

**Where:** Arm End Circuit

**When:** Saturday 19 June

**Meet:** TCM Market Lauderdale at 8:30am

**Finish:** by 1pm (including lunch)

**BYO:** Snacks/Drinks

**Lunch:** TCM Market

**Register:** [empowher@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:empowher@tasbaptists.org.au); Jenny Baxter (0401 652 566); Jo Sinclair (0401 297 151).

[Download A4 brochure >>><sup>3</sup>](#) OR [Download Trifold Brochure >>><sup>4</sup>](#)

## From National Church Life Survey (NCLS)

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We urge local churches to sign up for the 2021 National Church Life Survey. It is a safe and effective tool to listen to churchgoers in unprecedented times.

Results will help local churches focus on the future. Set aside a week in either October or November for church attenders to complete these anonymous surveys (paper or online).

Local church results will arrive in early 2022.

See [2021ncls.org.au](http://2021ncls.org.au)<sup>5</sup> for more.

### [WATCH VIDEO](#)<sup>6</sup>



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<sup>3</sup> [tasbaptists.org.au/clients/tasbaptists/downloads/empowher\\_adventure\\_a4.pdf](http://tasbaptists.org.au/clients/tasbaptists/downloads/empowher_adventure_a4.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [tasbaptists.org.au/clients/tasbaptists/downloads/empowher\\_adventure\\_tri-fold\\_19jun21.pdf](http://tasbaptists.org.au/clients/tasbaptists/downloads/empowher_adventure_tri-fold_19jun21.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [2021ncls.org.au](http://2021ncls.org.au)

<sup>6</sup> [youtu.be/nJIP5RXQexl](https://youtu.be/nJIP5RXQexl)

## COVID-19 Crisis in Asia

From Roshan Mendis, Asian Pacific Baptist Aid ([APBAid](#)<sup>7</sup>)

Please continue to keep APBAid in your prayers as we continue to serve our brothers and sisters who are in need in the region. [You can DONATE to their work here >>>](#)<sup>8</sup>

### India

#### India Covid19 Crisis Appeal

PLEASE CONTACT [ROSHAN@APBF.ORG](mailto:ROSHAN@APBF.ORG)



The devastation in India continues as it has recorded more than 25 million cases and 275,000 deaths, but experts say the real death toll is several times higher. Hundreds of corpses have been found floating and buried around the Ganges riverbank, highlighting the massive discrepancy in the deaths being reported. (Source - [BBC](#)<sup>9</sup>.)

With lockdowns extending across the country the poor working class of India have been hit the most, with little to no food, more borrowing, and no support to fall back on. (Source - [Scroll.in](#)<sup>10</sup>)

It's also with deep heartache that we bring the news of the tragic loss of over 40 Pastors from the Baptist

family in India to this intense second wave. Please keep the families that have been left behind in your prayers. Continue to prayer for God's comfort to surround them.

### Nepal and Sri Lanka



Threat of surge in Covid cases as the more infectious Indian Variant is found in Nepal in the midst of lack of beds, oxygen, equipment and Health Workers.

As the Covid numbers rise, Nepal continues to struggle with sourcing vaccines and control the situation.

Sri Lanka has also seen an increase in the COVID cases, and a lockdown took effect from the 21<sup>st</sup> of May to manage crowd movement with upcoming religious festivals to help flatten the curve.

<sup>7</sup> [apbf.org/page/apbaid](http://apbf.org/page/apbaid)

<sup>8</sup> [apbf.org/page/donate](http://apbf.org/page/donate)

<sup>9</sup> [apbf.org/page/apbaid](http://apbf.org/page/apbaid)

<sup>10</sup> [scroll.in/article/995298/invisible-in-the-pandemic-fires-a-slow-burn-of-hunger-and-distress-in-india](https://scroll.in/article/995298/invisible-in-the-pandemic-fires-a-slow-burn-of-hunger-and-distress-in-india)

## Myanmar



Over 100 days since the coup, and the fight for democracy still continues in Myanmar, with the people being relentless in their fight for democracy.

The United Nations in Myanmar warns of the impact on public health, including the COVID-19 response in Myanmar, due to the attacks on medical personnel and facilities, and reiterates its call for health workers, health facilities and patients to be protected.

Please continue to pray for justice for the people of Myanmar.

## Bangladesh



Bangladesh has also been affected with the extended lockdown being put in place to control the spread of the virus.

*For more information on how you can help please feel free to contact: [roshan@apbf.org](mailto:roshan@apbf.org) or [Shereen.apbaid@apbf.org](mailto:Shereen.apbaid@apbf.org)*

first peoples:

## Making History at the May Assembly

Paul Dare spoke a moving Welcome to Country at the recent Assembly.

"This is the beginning of something amazing."

*For those unlucky enough not to be at the Assembly in May, there was a welcome to country done for the first time I can remember. To me this was an incredible release of emotion and relief – let me tell you why.*

**As a proud indigenous Lia Pootah man this was momentous.** It was years of 'whiteness' being set aside, and the traditional custodians of the land being acknowledged.



There are some times in my life where I know I'm going to be emotional before it happens, and this was one of them. To me it was akin to the acknowledgement of Jesus, and welcoming of the Holy Spirit into my life. I have thought about it and these are strong words, but the relief I felt with the welcome to country was similar to the peace I felt when I first felt God within me. It was as powerful as that!

I have thought about why this was so and it has a lot to do with oppression and the whitewashing of my history not only by society, but my family's history.

**When I was growing up we were told there** were no Tasmanian aboriginals left. My dad was told never to mention it. But through time I began to understand more of my history, and more of my 'connection to

land'. I have discovered a peace in my ancestral home that in whiteness is not normal, but for me it's confirmation of everything that I am as a person and I am in God.

**Welcome to country is important because** it is our way of welcoming all, regardless of your history, in peace and friendship. We welcome you to take from the land what it can sustainably give and no more. We want to encourage growth of bonds and ideas. We also want to encourage you to grow in spirit (Holy Spirit) and see the land the way we see it. I use 'we' here because it is all about community and not the individual.

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*When I was growing up, we were told there were no Tasmanian aboriginals left.*

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**So where to from here?** Baptist people can help with reconciliation can heal wounds, both known and unknown, by having a welcome to country at your church. It is a powerful statement to the community and to your heart.

Yours in Christ,

**Paul Dare**



Paul is a "proud" indigenous Lia Pootah man who was born in Wynyard and grew up in Myalla. He has been an electronics technician, aerospace engineer, army officer and pastor. He retired in 2019, but currently serves as the pastor of the Levensdale Fellowship (Citywide).

testimony:

## Finding the Path to Inner Peace

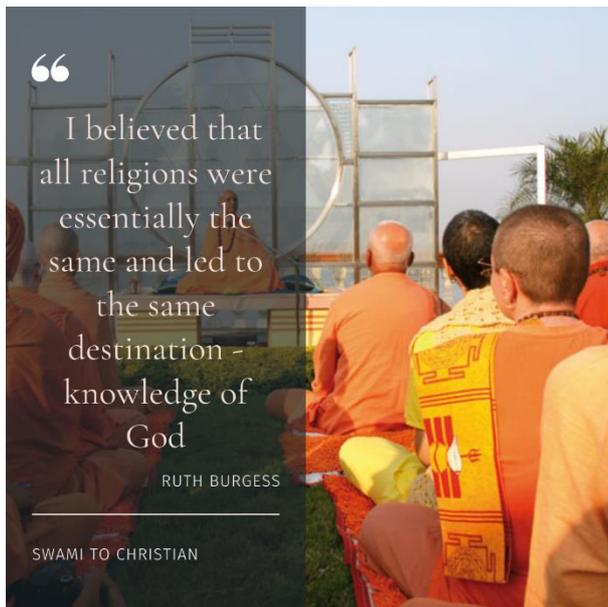
By Ruth Burgess

*This testimony is only the briefest of versions of my years of involvement and dedication to yoga and "the new age"; and how eventually I was delivered from this by our God.*

### The road to enlightenment

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I first began practising yoga at school and within a few years this took me on a path of total commitment and to living the life of a Swami (a Hindu ascetic). This involved thousands of hours of teaching and practice, including representing my organization internationally as a teacher. I left the ashram (yoga hermitage) for the final time at the end of 2014, and I finished teaching yoga in 2015, a total unbroken period of 35 years.



In my youth I was exposed to, and interested in, world religions and philosophies. My mother was a Christian, with whom I attended church regularly for a few years. My father, a psychiatrist, was more philosophical in outlook and was attracted to Eastern thought. In addition, my Quaker school was very liberal theologically in its approach.

Because of this varied spiritual diet, I believed that all religions were essentially the same and led to the same destination - knowledge of God. This is a fallacy of which I have only recently become aware. When you study comparative religions systematically you realise, of course, that all religions are by no means the same, even if there are some shared ideas. In fact, at best, all religions are only superficially similar.

### Where it all began

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At the age of 17 I enrolled in my first yoga class, and I remember thinking that the inner peace the teacher portrayed was what I was seeking. Later, in my early twenties, I sought out what I believed to be authentic yoga classes taught by a Swami. I was 22, and soon to become enmeshed in all things "New Age."



Ruth in 1986 teaching yoga in Sydney

Yoga at this time appealed primarily as an integrated system for the wellbeing of both body and mind. I enjoyed the feeling of stretching my body and I also needed techniques to help me deal with a level of anxiety. Yoga - at least initially - gave me the tools I needed. In the beginning, yoga's primary attraction was not spiritual - it was simply about feeling better. I suspect many people seek out yoga for this reason, and are relatively oblivious to the spiritual dimensions of the practice. I now feel the spiritual roots cannot be divorced from the practice.

And so, it wasn't long before the "spiritual" side of yoga began to exert an influence on me, and yoga became the passion and focus of my life. I thought it was the answer to my existential questions, and I pursued it to the point of being initiated as a Swami. At the age of 25 I took on a commitment to a spiritual path with absolute sincerity, and a belief that it would be lifelong. My life underwent a radical change.

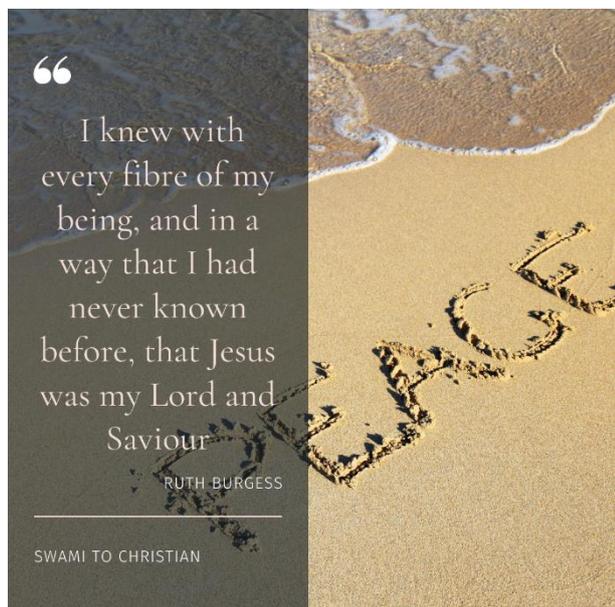
I became a resident of an ashram. I had a new name and a new identity. I submitted to my guru (a guru is considered an enlightened being) in my spiritual practices and duties, and in every dimension of my life. As

a Swami, I was expected to renounce possessions, shave my head, and wear robes - and this is what I did. All of this was considered a necessary part of being a sincere disciple, and a training for reducing egoic desires. And for me, the lure of so-called spiritual enlightenment and liberation from continual reincarnation was enough motivation.

## Finding true peace

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After half a lifetime on this path, however, I became increasingly aware of the darker side of yoga. I came to understand, through experience, the dangers of occult practices and that the unseen spiritual dimension of our world is very real. As the apostle Paul writes: "*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*" (Eph 6:12).



Having reached a point of profound disillusionment and the loss of my faith, I left the ashram at the end of 2014. I arrived back in Tasmania to spend a few months with my father before he died. It was a season of overwhelming grief. I was grieving my father, the death of my belief system, and the end of the purpose and career I had dedicated most of my life to.

Two years later and following a process of deconstructing and reconstructing my life, I once again began the search for spiritual peace. Remembering my experiences in church, I started attending church again (43 years after my last day in church!). This led me to a point of gradual and certain conviction: I knew with every fibre of my being and in a way that I had never known before, that Jesus was my Lord and Saviour and that in Him I had at last found the peace I so desired.

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* (John 14:27)

Because of a compelling desire to be cleansed of my past and to receive baptism – I was ultimately led to the Hobart Baptist Church; where I thank God every day for my new Christian family.

## Resources for you

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**FIND OUT MORE:** [Full version of Ruth's testimony >>>](#)<sup>11</sup>

**WATCH VIDEO:** [Rabi Maharaja on Hinduism, Buddhism and Yoga >>>](#)<sup>12</sup>

**READ ARTICLE:** [The Spirituality of Yoga >>>](#)<sup>13</sup>



*Ruth Burgess is a Registered Nurse and Diabetes Educator, studying Apologetics with [NGIM](#)<sup>14</sup>. She lives in South Hobart with husband David, and is the primary carer for her elderly mother. At present, she is in the process of becoming a member at Hobart Baptist Church.*

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<sup>11</sup> [thetruelight.net/wp/ruth-burgess-story](http://thetruelight.net/wp/ruth-burgess-story)

<sup>12</sup> [youtu.be/FmsAlKA8lvs](https://youtu.be/FmsAlKA8lvs)

<sup>13</sup> [midwestoutreach.org/2018/03/08/the-basic-spirituality-of-yoga](http://midwestoutreach.org/2018/03/08/the-basic-spirituality-of-yoga)

<sup>14</sup> [ngim.org](http://ngim.org)

June 2021, No. 3<sup>1</sup>

S T E P B Y S T E P  
**ADVANCE**  
Tasmanian  
**BAPTISTS** 



JUNE 17, 2021

Thursday 17 June, 2021

WELCOME! It's great you're here for the next instalment of **ADVANCE | step by step**, June 2021.

Which will you read first?

- **More from May Assembly:** Michael Henderson and Jenna Blackwell are here to serve your church!
- **Fostering Q&A:** With long-time foster carer Tracey Avery
- **Food for the Soul:** by Spiritual Director Denise Stephenson
- **NEWS - There's lots going on!** EmpoweHer Walk (this Saturday) | Perth Celebrates | Hobart's Luminous Festival | Pastors' and Leaders' Muster in July

Know you are both chosen - and dearly loved!

Blessings,

*Jenny*



**Jenny Baxter**  
Communications Manager, Tasmanian Baptists  
[jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au)

**What good work has God done in your life lately?  
Or in the life of your church or community?**

If you have a great story to tell, please connect with me. I'd love to hear what's going on.

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<sup>1</sup> [tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021](http://tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021)

engaging your community:

## Opportunities for Churches and Leaders

At the May Assembly **Michael Henderson** and **Jenna Blackwell** spoke, describing their new positions with Tasmanian Baptists from 1<sup>st</sup> July.



Tasmanian Baptists are now described as "mission-shaped". But in the real world, how do churches do that?

Community engagement is the answer! For churches and leaders, it's either a new way of thinking, or else, shifting 20th Century concepts into 21st Century form.

Thankfully help is at hand! From 1<sup>st</sup> July, Michael and Jenna are set aside to serve you and your church with mission leadership and development.

- Michael with *Mission and Leadership Development*
- Jenna as *Mission and Leadership Coach*

At the recent Assembly, they both spoke about how they can serve you and your church. Their talks were interesting, informative, and gave a glimpse into the ways in which Tasmanian Baptist churches can "skill-up" to connect with the community where God has placed them.

You can WATCH their Assembly presentations, below. Or READ their presentation overviews, further down.

### ASSEMBLY PRESENTATIONS VIDEO

Michael and Jenna May Assembly 2021 (42 minutes)<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> <https://youtu.be/tKulxJd7hLg>

## Mission and Leadership Development

**Michael Henderson**

*I see my role as holding hope for you, the leaders, and churches, of Tasmanian Baptists.*

**Holding hope, that our God has not abandoned us.** That he is with us, that he is always doing a new thing in our midst, and that he is trustworthy to his promises of grace and beauty and love going out across our state and world.

**Hope, despite the challenges and events that surround us.** I hold hope, and try to give hope and courage, that we can respond to the challenges, and see people in our communities grow in their awareness of God and what he can do in our world.

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:19)



**God is always taking us beyond the horizon.** He is always doing a new thing ([Isaiah 43:18-19](#)), and our role is to notice it and join in with courage. If this requires us to reimagine what is possible, then that is what I, and our Tasmanian Baptist leadership, are here for. Here is my list of priorities and ways that I, and we as Tasmanian Baptists Leadership, can support

your church:

**Love your community's heart ...** so you can join your community's story and what God is already doing there. Because church can't be defined as good church people saving bad community members.

**Listen to and support pastors and leaders ...** where you are at, understanding your

challenges and opportunities and helping you succeed. This includes helping you understand and implement the new state strategy around the new vision of church.

**Church measures that tell your story ...** because every church measures things, and sometimes they are terrible measures that reinforce a negative story. But if the measurements reinforce a positive story, change is possible.

**Listening prayer and innovation in the church ...** because finding out what God is already doing changes everything.

**Young leader development ...** especially around leadership.

**Rethinking finance and giving ...** because there are contemporary fundraising methods, used by other non-profit organisations, that are culturally appropriate to church.

I am so looking forward to what we can do together. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Peace,



**Michael Henderson**

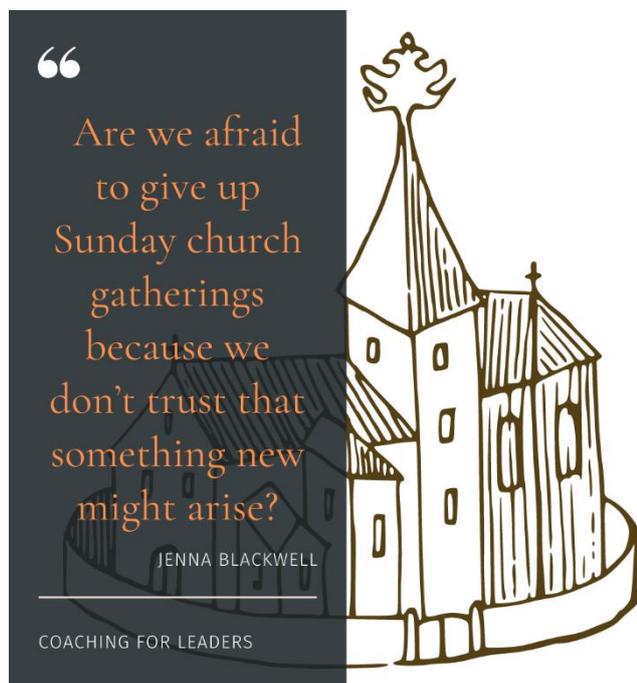
Mission and Leadership Development

[michael@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:michael@tasbaptists.org.au)

## Mission and Leadership Coaching

*Jenna Blackwell*

*It is important to realign our investments of time, energy, finances and resources to reimagining and reengaging afresh with what God is doing in Tasmania.*



One of the major ways to reengage with our communities is a focus on coaching leaders, disciples, followers of Jesus, missionaries, and people of God. It is a call to let our finances reflect our values and priorities.

We often do all we can to protect what we think is good. But when it looks like a fruit tree has died, there's a dilemma - to graft or to uproot? My avocado tree earlier this year suffered damage and I had to face this very question.

**A question was proposed to me:** 'Are we afraid to give up Sunday church gatherings because we don't trust that something new might arise?'

This is an uncomfortable question that raises different things in each of us. Our reaction will be different based on personality, values and experiences.

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*If we want different results, we must change the way we do things.*

Tom Northup

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[Tom Northup](#)<sup>3</sup> says, "All organisations are perfectly designed to get the results they are now getting. If we want different results, we must change the way we do things." So, if we want different results, we have to be courageous enough to act and to reimagine.

**Tasmanian Baptists want to realign for the sake of the Kingdom of God**, for the sake of Tasmanians, and for the sake of member churches and faith communities.

- **To support** the development of new faith communities
- **To improve communication** - both from Tasmanian Baptists and to member churches and faith communities
- **To train and empower** servant-hearted leaders, disciples and missionaries to walk the intersection of worship, community and mission
- **To help people discover** their unique calling and to reimagine with God what this could look like in everyday life, and reengage with others as they walk this out

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<sup>3</sup> [imgsuccess.com/about-tom-northup](https://imgsuccess.com/about-tom-northup)

**One major way we are realigning is through coaching.** I am being released to coach (particularly women and young adults) one day a week. All costs to recipients are covered by Tasmanian Baptists, through my employment. This is massive! By way of comparison, most coaches charge a minimum of \$100/hour.

## About Christian coaching

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Christian coaching is "an ongoing intentional conversation that empowers a person or group to fully live out God's calling," suggests [Keith Webb](#)<sup>4</sup>.

Coaching enables the journey of spiritual transformation. It is participant owned, and therefore results in action. Coaching can be short term or long term, project or individual based. For example, focus on:

General growth and transformation - developing self-understanding of personality, strengths, gifts and values ...

- Balance/margin/preventing burnout
- Role/missional engagement and initiatives
- Problem/project to work on solutions and outcomes

Now is the time to act, to try new things, to decide how to graft or uproot. We don't want to still be talking about it in five years' time, with no growth.

Here's my avocado tree more recently, starting the new growth process.

It's time to reimagine how we get involved with what God is doing in Tasmania, and to reengage, welcoming our communities to experience the presence of God afresh, with cultural understanding.

*Please get in touch with me to discuss the benefit to you and your church through coaching!*



**Jenna Blackwell**

Mission and Leadership Coach

[jenna@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenna@tasbaptists.org.au)

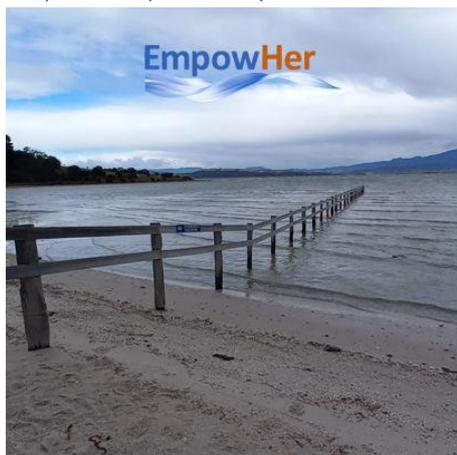
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<sup>4</sup> keithwebb.com/about

news:

## EmpowHer Southern Coastal Walk

EmpowHer (a ministry of Tasmanian Baptist Women) are organising a walk for Southern women and girls.

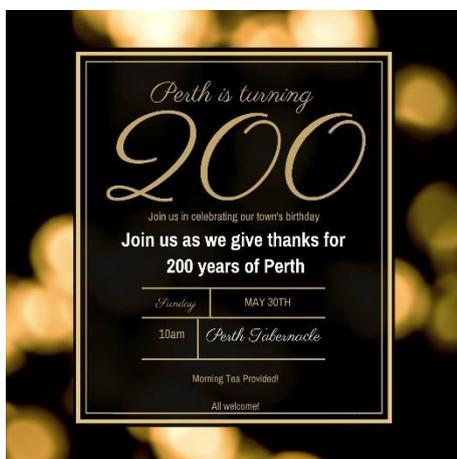


**Where:** Arm End Circuit  
**When:** Saturday 19 June  
**Meet:** TCM Market Lauderdale at 8:30am  
**Finish:** by 1pm (including lunch)  
**BYO:** Snacks/Drinks  
**Lunch:** TCM Market  
**Register:** [empowher@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:empowher@tasbaptists.org.au); Jenny Baxter (0401 652 566); Jo Sinclair (0401 297 151).

**HEADS UP! Watch out for details of a northwestern walk coming soon.**

## Perth Thanksgiving Service, 30th May

*Saying 'thanks' is an important part of living together as well as in our relationship with God.*



The Perth Baptist Church had a special Thanksgiving Service on 30 May as part of the town's bicentennial of the naming of the town.

The service focused on thanksgiving for the past, the present and the future. Those attending gave thanks to God for William and Mary Gibson whose vision and obedience to God resulted in the building of the church in 1889 and the hall opposite in 1862 along with many other churches in Tasmania.

It was noted that Perth was named by Governor Macquarie on one of his visits to the Gibson's home.

William Gibson was not a preacher, but he had the gift to generate a profit from his business and used that money to build churches and 'import' preachers from the Spurgeon College in England to pastor churches in Tasmania.

The vision for the church was for it to be a place of worship and to go forth and preach the gospel.

When the Gibson family home became too large for the needs of a single family, the home became a place of care for people with severe or multiple disabilities. Eskleigh Home was born, and remains today as a home for people with a disability. It was a blessing that some residents and their careers, were present at the Service.

Read more about Perth's Thanksgiving Service in the June **Regional RoundUp**, due out in *ADVANCE | step by step* on 1st July.

## Luminous Festival, Hobart

17th June to 4th July



In the fourth century, Christians began celebrating the birth of Jesus on December 25 in a reworking of the pagan Roman winter solstice celebrations. The cold, dark, bleak reality, of winter was an ideal time to celebrate the warmth and light of Christ coming into the world as a signpost of hope and redemption. Winter in Hobart lends itself to do the same.

This year, Hobart Baptist Church is challenging the city of Hobart with a festival coinciding with Dark Mofo. Several events are planned, and all are welcome!

- **Breathe, Shine and Seek to Mend** *Michael Henderson Art Installation* | LAUNCH 6pm, 17th June | OPEN 18th - 22nd June
- **Conversation with Ruth Burgess** *From Hindu Guru to Christian* | 6pm 23rd June
- **Conversation Panel** *Religion, Spirituality and the Future of Tasmania* | Jacque Petrusma, Cassy O'Connor, Stephen Baxter, Paul Dare | 6pm 25th June
- **Carols at the Tab** *Celebrating Christmas in Winter* | 6pm, 2nd July

FREE REGISTRATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL!

[More info Registrations >>>](#)<sup>5</sup>

## PASTOR'S MUSTER: Baptists in Mission Conference, 5-7 July 2021

Online at regional hubs - Mornington, Longford, Devonport

A collaboration between Crossover Australia and Global Interaction

This conference is about the mission of God, and the mission of God is at the core of our Australian Baptist identity.

**Who is it for?** Pastors, leadership teams, and emerging leaders

**How much?** \$75, with \$60 subsidy available from Tas Baptists (how good is that!)

[More info and Register >>>](#)

[Watch the Video ...](#)<sup>6</sup>



<sup>5</sup> [hobartbaptist.org.au/luminous](http://hobartbaptist.org.au/luminous)

<sup>6</sup> [vimeo.com/523655507](https://vimeo.com/523655507)

reimagining love and care:

## Children Need a Community Around Them

Tracey Avery attends City Baptist Launceston, and is a long-term foster carer.



### Tell us about where you live and what your family looks like at the moment?

I live in Launceston with my husband Stephen. Between us, we have five children aged between 16 and 28 years. In our home at present, we have my three children and my daughter's fiancé, and we are preparing for our first grandbaby. Stephen's two adult children live independently.

My children are not biological, they have all come through a government-run foster care agency. The oldest has lived with me since he was two years old, has tried living independently three times, and for various reasons that has not worked out for him. The middle girl is 18, has lived with me for 16 years, and her fiancé also lives with us. They are expecting a baby in August.

The youngest girl is 16, and has lived with me since she was eleven months old. I became legal guardian to the youngest when she was three, and the middle when she was nine years of age. Having guardianship made parenting easier in regard to decision making.

### When and why did you begin fostering?

I have been fostering for 26 years. I started foster caring for two reasons: the desire to become a parent; and wanting to make a difference in the lives of children who were unable to live within their own biological family. Stephen is new on this journey with me. God knew exactly what we all needed when He brought Stephen into our world.



### What are some of the challenges you face as a foster parent?

It can be lonely if you don't reach out, it takes courage. Fostering is rewarding and has daily challenges. For me having three children, all from different families under one roof, felt like I was like parenting three different families. Since the beginning I have facilitated contact with their families, and although challenging at times, I believe it has benefited the children in making their own decisions in regard to relationships within their families.

I would love to see the church rise up and support carers and the children they are caring for, even to somehow connect with their families.

When my girls were young and we would go to church, and many Sundays I really had to push through to be there. I would watch people within the congregation connect with other children, just not mine. I don't believe it was because the congregation didn't want to connect with them, but I do wonder if they just didn't have the skills.

I remember journaling about this and wondering: if the church cannot love and connect with the children that come into the church through foster care, then how will the church ever love the people out in the communities and on the streets?

Fostering changes your life forever, and it comes at a cost to all. As a foster carer I have chosen that path. My eyes are wide open to the hurt and brokenness the children and their families experience. Whilst I have a choice to be a foster carer, the children don't have a choice to come into foster care.

**How does being a Christian foster carer make a difference to what you do?**

I love the peace that God places within. On days where I have been challenged beyond comprehension, I still have this sense of His peace. Knowing that God loves my children more than I can ever imagine, I know He is my strength and He will carry me through those days.

**What is the best piece of advice you have received about fostering?**

I would advise others to connect and build a community around you, and the children, in your care. Most importantly, be kind to yourself, schedule time out.

**Do you ever feel sad, or guilty, or uncomfortable about the idea of raising other people's children?**

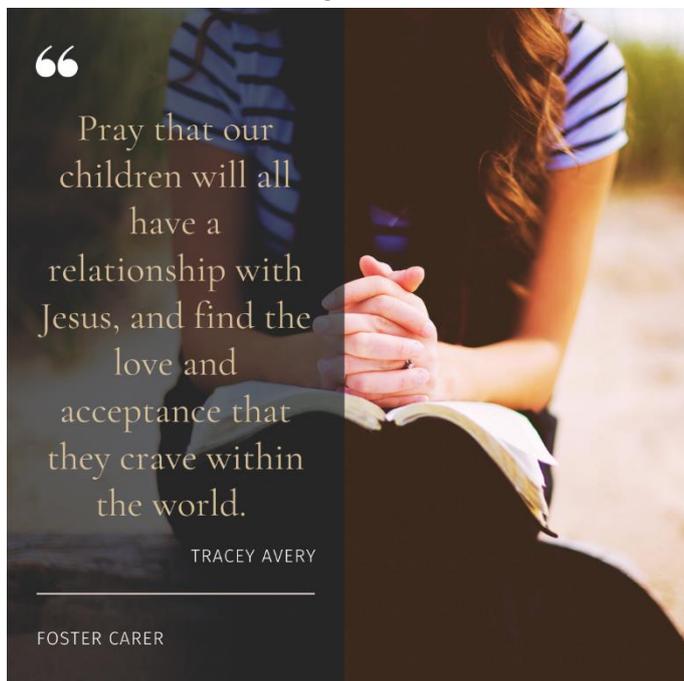
I have had a range of emotions over the years. My heart breaks for my children, that they were not able to be raised within their own biological families. I am thankful for the relationships I have with my children and their families. It is my privilege to be a light and carry a banner for God into their lives.

**Do you have support from others to assist you in your foster care journey?**

Yes, over the years I have gathered a team of friends who are supportive of myself and my children. Honestly, I'm not sure what I would have done without their support.

**What are some of the practical things that people can do to assist foster carers?**

Befriend them. Come alongside them, and do life with them. We all need community, love and acceptance.



The children need a community around them. They need that reassurance that there are people available to step in, to help out through times when circumstances are out of our control.

**How can we pray for you and your family?**

Pray that our children will all have a relationship with Jesus, and find the love and acceptance that they crave within the world. At the end of the day nothing matters, only our relationship with God.

I am thankful for my journey as a foster carer. I would not be who I am today if I had not had the privilege of raising and loving other people's children. Even in the hard days I am thankful.

**Tracey Avery**

food for thought:

## Keep it Real - #no filter!

By Denise Stephenson

*Denise is a trained Spiritual Director and, until December 2020, was Spiritual Formation Pastor at LifeWay Baptist Church Devonport.*

I love Instagram!

All those squares filled with beautiful pictures of magical places, designer interiors, and adorable children dressed in linen!

Most of us (on our good days) recognise that Instagram is the home of "This Filtered Life". Isn't it tempting to apply a "filter" to life so it looks good on the outside?

Whilst none of us really expects social media to be an honest reflection of life, most of us hope our communities of faith would be the one place we feel safe enough to be our "unfiltered" self. But if I am honest, church is often a place, as much as any other, where I have felt pressure to look, act or feel a particular kind of way.

We say, "Come as you are", but really we mean come if you feel upbeat, on top of things, happy and well - and if you're not, at least try act as if you are. Apply the "worship" filter where it's smiling, happy people holding hands. "We're here to worship God!!" Amen?!

## We try and "stay together"



What would our community of faith, and our worship, look like if it was #nofilter? In the weeks following my husband Mark's cancer diagnosis, I really didn't feel like going to church. But, being one of the pastors, I turned up to church each week, determined to keep it all 'together'. I had my "filter" firmly in place.

As soon as the songs started, every word would punch into my gut, and I would start crying... which was the LAST thing I wanted to do. Welcome to #no filter! It was awful but it was real. Without me noticing, people would come to stand with me, and after the service, friends would slip into the chair beside me and pray for me.

I would go home, still in pain, still afraid, a blotchy, red-faced teary mess but having what I needed to keep going.

## Embrace what God does for you

It takes guts to show our vulnerabilities, our weaknesses, and our messiness - to be real. But that's exactly what God wants from us. God isn't fooled by the filter, and wants to see the real person made in his image. I find that such a relief. I love The Message translation of Romans 12:1-2 which says:

*Here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life--your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life--and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. (Romans 12:1-2 MSG)*

Let's start #nofilter Sunday, and see what happens when we give God our real self. I think it could change church.

For good!

*Denise Stephenson*



*Denise, and her husband Mark, recently moved to Lymington (south of Cygnet) where they are exploring new ways of being a community of faith in their new neighbourhood. Denise and Mark sail, garden, chop wood (it's cold down here!) and hang out in cafes, getting to know their new neighbourhood, and keeping a lookout for what God is doing down in the deep south.*

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June 2021, No. 4<sup>1</sup>

S T E P B Y S T E P  
**ADVANCE**  
Tasmanian  
**BAPTISTS** 

JULY 1, 2021

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN . . .

MY LOVE HAS BEEN  
POURED OUT INTO YOUR  
HEARTS THROUGH THE  
HOLY SPIRIT

*Based on Romans 5:5*



Welcome!

This week's Bible encouragement is such a good one. It's so heartening to remember that God's love is being **poured into** you.

Here is the final instalment of the June 2021 **ADVANCE | step by step ...**

- **REGIONAL ROUNDUP:** Our Churches Shine
- **NEWS – TOGETHER** Conference | *Covid-19 in Bangladesh* | KidzFest 2022 | *Poetry by Ray Hawkins*
- **FAREWELL:** *Jeff McKinnon "retires"*
- **BAPTISTS IN MISSION:** *The Pastors' and Leaders' Muster is NEXT WEEK!*

Happy Reading!

*Jenny*



**Jenny Baxter**  
Communications Manager, Tasmanian Baptists  
[jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jennyb@tasbaptists.org.au)

**What good work has God done in your life lately?  
Or in the life of your church or community?**

If you have a great story to tell, please connect with me. I'd love to hear what's going on.

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<sup>1</sup> [tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021](http://tasbaptists.org.au/june-2021)

around the grounds:

## Tasmanian Baptists in Action

OH NO! Did your church miss out this time?

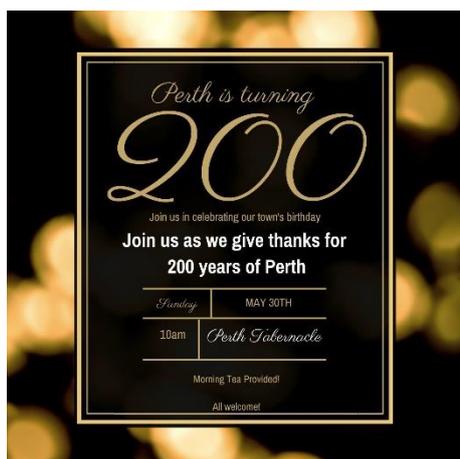
The next **Regional RoundUp** due date is 20th August for release in *ADVANCE | step by step* on 26th August. Please send contributions to [jenny@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenny@tasbaptists.org.au)

## North

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### Perth

Bi-Centenary



The Perth Baptist Church had a special **Thanksgiving Service** on 30<sup>th</sup> May as part of the town's bicentennial of the naming of the town.

During the service some spoke of their and their family's involvement in the activities of the church over many generations while another spoke of his time at the church at the Easter camps which were run there in the 1950's and 60's and of his conversion at one of the camps. The camps have been a blessing to many through generations.

In giving thanks for the present a focus on the town and its growth and the way in which the church serves the community was apparent.

In talking about the future, thanks were given for the current influx of new families with children and teenagers who are commencing their life journey with a view to make a difference in their community.

**The church's community program** continues with a balance of providing help to those in need in the town along with providing a place of worship and fellowship and the preaching of the gospel of salvation.

The service was another step in the people of Perth seeing beyond the historical Baptist Tabernacle that dominates the town to an inviting, warm and open Christian fellowship who make up the only local church.

## Northwest

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### Ulverstone

May Mission Month

**May Mission Month** was embraced as we listened and was challenged by guest speakers Scott and Bronwyn Waterhouse. Both Scott and Bronwyn shared their hearts and spoke of the work they do in helping people in Ulverstone through City Mission and New Mornings.

It was wonderful to watch videos in our church service that were prepared by our three missionary families who we support financially and prayerfully. Technology sure is a great way to stay connected and informed, and it is a privilege to share in the journey with each of them.

## Youth Group



Our **UB Youth** have continued to meet together fortnightly on Saturdays throughout Term Two. They have enjoyed an 80's theme night (pictured), where the leaders may have had too much fun dressing up!

A bonfire at Camp Clayton was held, where our youth band led a time of worship, and some of our kids shared their testimonies. When invited, a number of kids came forward to either ask Jesus to be Lord of their life, or to recommit their life to Him. This really was an exciting evening of which we are still praising God for.

We finished our term with a Youth-Take-Over night where the night was run by our youth. This was a glow in the dark theme. Everyone was encouraged to come wearing black so we could deck

them out in glow sticks and glow paint. Our entire night was organized and run by the youth with the devotion and games being centred on Jesus being light. Once again, our youth band led us in worship. We are excited for our planned term 3 program to commence, but even more excited to do life with these amazing kids and watch them grow in their relationship with Jesus and each other.

### The gift of song

**Over the last couple of months**, we have been blessed to have a number of people join us on a Sunday morning from the Solomon Islands. It was an absolute treat on Mother's Day to be ministered to, by them in song. The songs they sang were moving and heartfelt. In addition, our Tuesday morning craft group kindly knitted each of them a beanie to aid in keeping them warm while they pick fruit.

### Alpha

**Alpha continues** on a Wednesday evening, as we join together for a meal, watch, listen, love and have great conversation. We have just enjoyed a weekend together at Camp Clayton.

## WYNYARD

### Wednesday Get Together



Now meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays for fun and fellowship, **Wednesday Get Together** recently enjoyed a bus trip to the Arboretum Botanical Garden at Eugenana, south of Devonport. They enjoyed a delicious lunch at The Berry Patch.

### Pancakes

**The Sunday School children** and some parents had a pancake morning. This is an annual event.

### Chat 'n' Choose

**Many ladies** in the community are looking forward to Chat 'n' Choose commencing on July 22<sup>nd</sup> after a long break due to Covid.

## JUST BLOKES

**Approximately 90 men** gathered for a Pizza night for JUST BLOKES when the guest speaker was Bob Bramley who is an ambassador for SURVIVING TURBULENCE. Bob takes to the skies to break a solo flying record, and shine a light on youth mental health.

JUST BLOKES meets quarterly, it gives men across the NW Tasmania an opportunity to connect, encourage and support other men in their physical, mental and spiritual journeys.

## South

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### CITYWIDE



**It's been a busy 3 months at Citywide** and we're praising God for personal growth, celebrations and blessings. Mitchell Semmens and Amalie Menzies were baptised, witnessing to their 'encounters' and commitment to Jesus. We're praising God for a new 'miracle' baby, Jason Rai, in our Nepalese congregation. We've enjoyed some family bush walks, and for some the challenges of longer, more rugged walks.

**30 people committed to a 5-week course, *The Calling Lab***, designed to help people discern and find

God's calling for their life. This has been a great impetus for people who earnestly want to seek God's direction for them. Additionally, we held a one day seminar run by the *Victorious Ministries in Christ* team designed for people to find freedom from their blockages to growth. A truly anointed day for over 30 people who attended, many of whom have had breakthroughs and others receiving follow-up 1:1 prayer ministry. God is good!

Praise God, **our Nepalese congregation** have been successful in receiving a grant from the *Tas Development Fund* to purchase a new hybrid car with modifications for their outreach program of driver mentoring for immigrant arrivals.

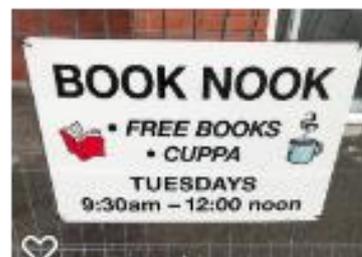
Citywide will be hosting a 2021 local **Global Leadership Summit** on 29 October. There is an invitation to anyone from our sister churches who would like to join us - just email [church@citywidehobart.org.au](mailto:church@citywidehobart.org.au) and let us know. Early bird price is \$60 - great value for inspiring input.

### CLAREMONT

Claremont Baptist had a wonderful **Winter Dinner** at our local RSL in June (pictured). We were able to invite friends and family to share an informal evening with us. Good to get to know some of our regulars' family members.



**Book Nook** originally started as a community book exchange. Gradually it has become a pleasant morning for church and locals to drop in for a cuppa and a chat and some even scan the bookshelves. This low-key outreach continues to grow and flourish.



We are sadly **farewelling the Wilson- Roberts family** as they take up new career options on the mainland. Garth and Rebecca have been members since their childhoods and have held active positions in our church leadership. We know the Lord has plans for them and we send them out in love in His care. We ask for prayer as we approach the QBM in August, for our willingness to seek God's leading and the filling of leadership positions.

## HOBART

### Redevelopment News

**Our redevelopment is complete!** Praise God after five years of blood, sweat and tears we now have a fantastic new facility to welcome wayfarers, sojourners and church family of all nationalities.

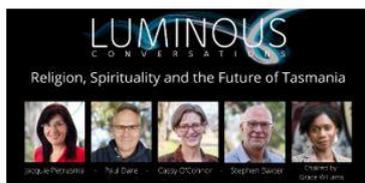
[Read the final "Redevelopment Update", with some photos, HERE >>>](#)<sup>2</sup>

### Luminous Festival

With our new facilities, the **Luminous Festival** has been taking place at Hobart since 17<sup>th</sup> June, and concludes on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

The Festival has been a conscious effort to connect with the local community with a story of hope and light during the Dark Mofo season.

- *Breathe, Shine and Seek to Mend* Michael Henderson's art installation was viewed by over 300 people during five days.
- *Ruth Burgess* spoke to 43 people about her life as a yoga teacher and Hindu ascetic, and her subsequent shift to Christianity after 35 years.
- *Stephen Baxter, Paul Dare, Jacquie Petrusma MP and Cassy O'Connor MP* discussed "The Future of Religion and Spirituality in Tasmania". This was attended by 72 people, and took the form of a panel, hosted by Grace Williams.
- *Christmas in Winter: Carols in the Tab*, on Friday 2nd July promises to be a great event. ALL WELCOME! [Registrations are essential >>>](#)<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> [hobartbaptist.org.au/2021/06/18/latest-building-development-news-5](http://hobartbaptist.org.au/2021/06/18/latest-building-development-news-5)

<sup>3</sup> [eventbrite.com.au/e/christmas-in-winter-carols-in-the-tab-registration-157416943315](https://eventbrite.com.au/e/christmas-in-winter-carols-in-the-tab-registration-157416943315)

news:

## “Together” Online Conference, 7-10 July 2021

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The Baptist World Alliance invites you to attend the 22<sup>nd</sup> Baptist World Congress.

Held every five years, the 2020 Baptist World Congress, originally planned to take place in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

The big news is that the postponed Congress will be available for online for Baptists to attend globally, with free entry for Australians.

**Simply register for the \$US70 option and use the discount code ABM to register for FREE!**

[Register Here >>>](#)<sup>4</sup>

WATCH:<sup>5</sup>

A Special Update for Australian Baptists from the General Secretary Dr Elijah Brown, Baptist World Alliance, with news for Aussies about attending.

*"We are called **together** to God's global mission."*

*Elijah Brown*



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<sup>4</sup> [bwa2021.org](http://bwa2021.org)

<sup>5</sup> [youtube.com/watch?v=T5nGtRk7MP8](https://youtube.com/watch?v=T5nGtRk7MP8)

## Bangladesh struggles to contain COVID

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"The pandemic has impacted Bangladesh profoundly," says Baptist World Aid's South Asia Regional Lead, Nathan Sarkar, who lives in Bangladesh. "It's disrupted people's livelihood and raised poverty in 2020 . . . there could be about 90 million people who are under severe poverty stress due to the pandemic."

And garment workers are in a vulnerable position, he says. "They can hardly follow health protocols and have to live in congested spaces where ensuring social distancing is difficult. They use common bathrooms, and sit and eat in common places."

Yet, through the pandemic, Baptist World Aid continues to support families in Bangladesh. Some of whom, like Suresh, work for garment factories in Dhaka.



*Pictured: Suresh, a garment factory worker, in front of the factory where he works. [Read more about his story HERE >>>](#)<sup>6</sup>*

For almost 20 years, Suresh has worked in the garment industry. The early days (of the pandemic) were the hardest. Leaving his wife and youngest daughter behind in his village to fend for themselves, while he travelled to the city for work.

Away from home, he worries for his wife and daughter. And that, says Mr Sarker, is where Baptist World Aid and its local partners have stepped in.

"Many generous Australians are helping to support the families of garment workers like Suresh," he explains. "They learn new skills to help grow the family income, growing fruit and vegetables, fish farming. And in this time of COVID, they're also learning life-saving hygiene techniques."

If you'd like to learn more about this work or support it yourself, please visit [www.baptistworldaid.org.au/matching-grant](http://www.baptistworldaid.org.au/matching-grant).

**Melissa Lipsett**

Chief Operating Officer, [Baptist World Aid](#)

## KidzFest Launceston at Tasmania Celebration, 28 May 2022

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Will Graham is coming to Tasmania next year, and there will be a KidzFest program as part of the Saturday program.



Members of Christian churches in Launceston are urged to consider supporting this event as much as is possible. A team is being gathered to help lead this event in the best possible direction and create a mega-awesome kids' fun for the day on Saturday 28th May 2022.

Please get in touch with me, Russell McKenzie, if you would like to join the organising team, and/or if your church would be interested in participating in this event.

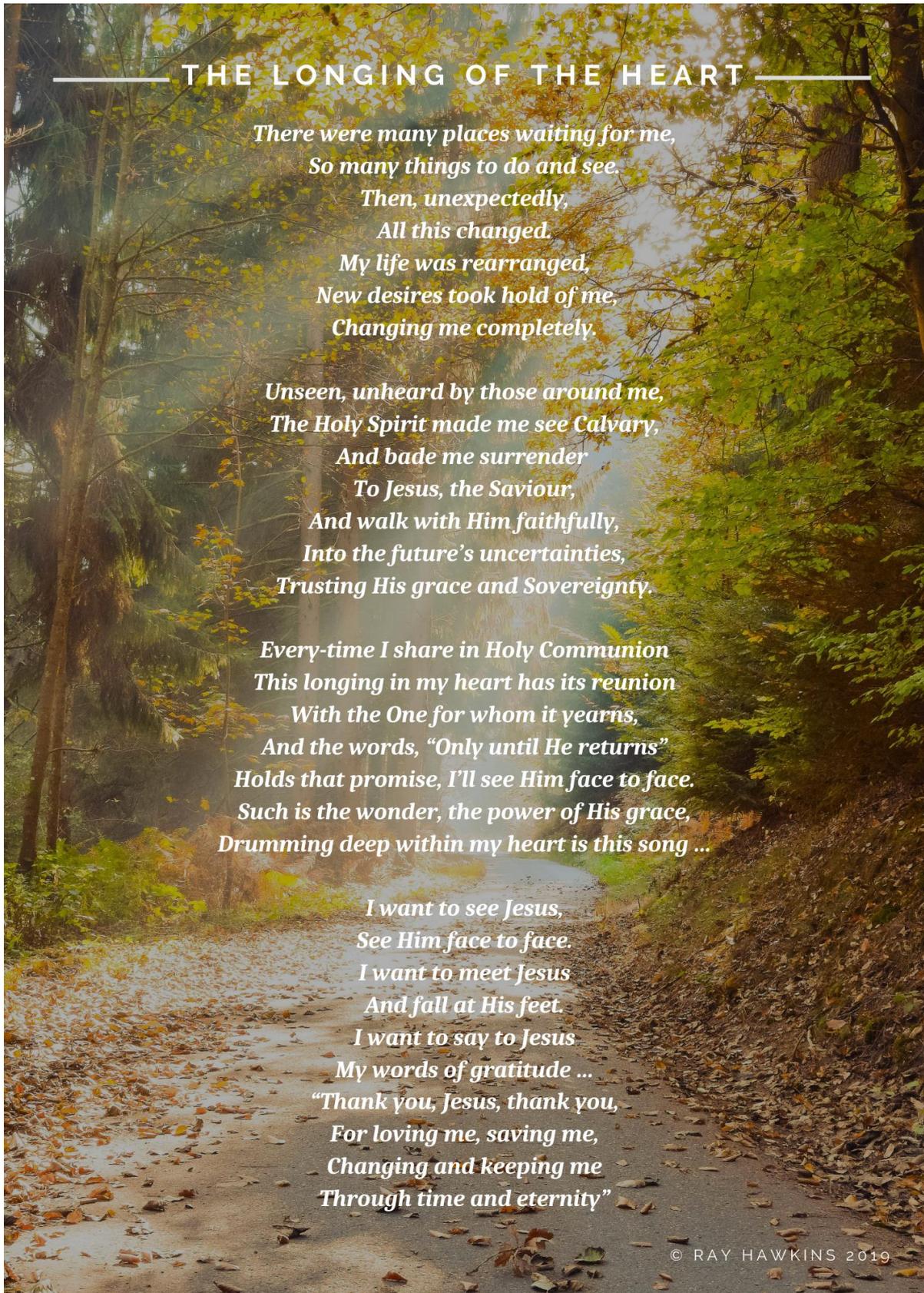
**Russell McKenzie**, Co-ordinator of KidzFest Launceston

[russandkate@internode.on.net](mailto:russandkate@internode.on.net). Find out More info: [Tasmania Celebration >>>](#)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [baptistworldaid.org.au/for-our-family-and-yours-episode-2](http://baptistworldaid.org.au/for-our-family-and-yours-episode-2)

<sup>7</sup> [tasmania.billygraham.org](http://tasmania.billygraham.org)



— THE LONGING OF THE HEART —

*There were many places waiting for me,  
So many things to do and see.  
Then, unexpectedly,  
All this changed.  
My life was rearranged,  
New desires took hold of me,  
Changing me completely.*

*Unseen, unheard by those around me,  
The Holy Spirit made me see Calvary,  
And bade me surrender  
To Jesus, the Saviour,  
And walk with Him faithfully,  
Into the future's uncertainties,  
Trusting His grace and Sovereignty.*

*Every-time I share in Holy Communion  
This longing in my heart has its reunion  
With the One for whom it yearns,  
And the words, "Only until He returns"  
Holds that promise, I'll see Him face to face.  
Such is the wonder, the power of His grace,  
Drumming deep within my heart is this song ...*

*I want to see Jesus,  
See Him face to face.  
I want to meet Jesus  
And fall at His feet.  
I want to say to Jesus  
My words of gratitude ...  
"Thank you, Jesus, thank you,  
For loving me, saving me,  
Changing and keeping me  
Through time and eternity"*

© RAY HAWKINS 2019

staff:

## Jeff Steps into the Great Beyond



After over 20 years of service to Tasmanian Baptists, Mission Leadership Team member Jeff McKinnon finished his time on staff on Wednesday 30th of June.

While he has "retired" from Tasmanian Baptists, he will continue with City Baptist (Launceston) for some years yet!

***Let's thank Jeff for his amazing contribution to the Baptist movement.***

In particular, Jeff has impacted the Tasmanian Baptist Council with his work, passion and energy. The two most recent chairpeople were approached for comment about Jeff . . .

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### Peter Clarke, Chair, Tasmanian Baptist Council, 2018 to present

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*"I have been serving with Tasmanian Baptists for just over 20 years. Throughout that whole time one of the constants has been Jeff McKinnon.*



*"Jeff has served in a huge number of roles including local church pastor, and leadership with Tas Baptists. His name just keeps on cropping up wherever you go. Ministry has never been "just a job" for Jeff. It is a calling which he has sown into sacrificially.*

*"I have been inspired by his passion and commitment to the important things in life - the sort of things Jesus would be concerned about. Jeff has shown that faith in Christ should be accompanied by real and tangible efforts to improve the lives of the vulnerable and for each of us to live responsibly in God's beautiful creation.*

*"As he moves into this new season in his life I know that God will continue to use Jeff to bless others."*

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### Wendy Marston, Chair, Tasmanian Baptist Council, 2014 to 2018

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*"I worked closely with Jeff particularly when I was the Chair of the Tas Baptist Council. Jeff has skills and attributes which are many and varied. I've made a list - although no doubt there are more!"*

- Thorough
- Gives thoughtful responses
- Passionate about justice for all,
- Diligent
- Great teacher
- Helpful

- Good listener
- Good at bringing people together
- Great Bible knowledge
- Reliable
- Good facilitator
- In depth, well-researched preaching.

## Jeff McKinnon

Overview with Tasmanian Baptists, 1990 to 2021

### 1990 to 1999



**Jeff and Sue McKinnon** (pictured) commenced ministry in Tasmania in June 1990 as Rob Beeston was retiring as Superintendent. After a brief gap, **Norman Pell** became the Superintendent for seven years in the 1990s. During these years Jeff worked closely with Norman, especially with two stints on the Pastoral Committee, the second as Chairperson.

Norman encouraged Jeff to start Baptist Pastors Renewal Retreats. This grew into an interdenominational retreat strategy initially run by Tasmanian Baptists. Ladies' retreats were also added. Jeff led this strategy for over 20 years. He also offered support to Baptist church plants at Bridport and Port Sorell.

### 2000 to 2010

After Norman's retirement there was a gap between Superintendents. Jeff served on a Review Committee led by Ivan James in the late 1990s. From this, **Garry Billing** was called as Superintendent in 2000, serving until 2010.

Jeff worked closely with Garry in various ways including convening his advisory group. During these years Jeff coordinated the Tasmanian Baptist Consultancy Team, receiving six years' training from Les Scarborough. He served as Vice President, President and then Immediate Past President, including serving on the Tasmanian Baptist Council, in 2000-2003. With Ivan Jordan, Jeff facilitated a well-attended rural ministry day at Sheffield.



Jeff has served on the Mission Leadership Team (MLT) since 2008. Within that role he has provided oversight of the northern churches and pastors, and the Town and Country Churches.

*The MLT in December 2019*

In Launceston, he encouraged pastors to meet for coffee weekly and church leadership groups to gather three or four times per year (pictured in September 2019). In about 2010 Jeff wrote a paper considering options for the future of Tasmanian Baptists. Should we join the [Baptist Union of Victoria](#) (BUV)? Could we join BUV as a special region? If we retain our independence, what leadership model will serve us best?



## 2010 to 2017

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At Garry's retirement in 2010, **John Smith** (pictured) was inducted as Superintendent. He served in this role for about eight years. In this period Jeff again led the Pastoral Committee.



In 2011, in liaison with the BUV, Jeff drafted policies regarding pastors, and from 2013 implemented the Professional Development Process.

Jeff was a founding board member of [A Just Cause](#) ("Baptist Churches working for a more just world"). He also represented Tasmanian Baptists at various national meetings. Since 2016, Jeff also led a number of Converge teams from Tasmania to Canberra. He set up the Pioneering Incubator in about 2015.

In 2016 the first *Understanding the Baptist Movement* study intensive was held. As at 2021, 49 people have completed this study.

In 2016 Jeff assisted the Superintendent as Investigator and then Supervisor in a matter of serious allegations of misconduct of one of our pastors. This process continued over a twelve-month period.



**Stephen Baxter** (pictured with Jeff) became Mission Director in July 2017. Jeff set up and coordinated the Tasmanian Baptist Social Justice Taskforce. He returned for a final year on Council in 2020-2021.

Jeff has conducted reviews and consultancies in about eight Baptist churches, plus one for the Hobart churches; preached in 22 of our churches; conducted interim ministries at Citywide, Tarooma, City and Wynyard; mentored numerous Baptist pastors, each for 2-4 years; and assisted five churches find new pastors.

Play the Wordfind using Wendy Marston's words:

## There's Something about Jeff

U	I	L	R	S	D	I	L	I	G	E	N	T	H
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- RESEARCHER
- LISTENER
- JUSTICE
- HELPFUL
- TEACHER
- PASSIONATE
- RELIABLE
- BIBLICAL
- FACILITATOR
- THOUGHTFUL
- PREACHER
- DILIGENT
- DEEP
- THOROUGH
- GOODOPERATOR

leaders' training:

## A Special Opportunity

Pastors' and Leaders' Muster: Online at regional hubs

**This will be a great event and you are encouraged to attend!**



*A collaboration between Crossover Australia and Global Interaction*

This conference is about the mission of God ... and the mission of God is at the core of our Australian Baptist identity.

At our best we articulate the good news of Jesus in word and deed, always staying true to the heart of the Gospel and sensitive to cultural context. Christian witness has always needed translation and re-interpretation as it has made its way into and through cultures, empires, geographies, and languages. Enculturation is inherent to the Gospel. This requires the activity of the Spirit alongside the dedicated work of

compassionate and curious followers of Jesus.

**WHO IS IT FOR?** Pastors, leadership teams, and emerging leaders.

No matter your particular calling (eg. workplace evangelism, church planting, intercultural mission, Kingdom-centred social enterprises), each person will develop a fresh awareness of where they are located in the story of God's mission. This awareness invariably leads to more intentional, faithful and effective participation in mission and evangelism.

## Read the Program

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- [Program Online >>>](#)<sup>8</sup> It's very impressive!
- 2 to 6:30pm each day, Mon/Tue/Wed 5-7 July, 2021
- 4 x 40-minute sessions each afternoon
- There will be breaks between each session for discussion and fellowship time
- **TAS SPECIAL! 2-2:40pm Wednesday:** *Maddy Svoboda* (host) and *Matt Garvin* (storyteller) [Discipling Digital Natives: Reaching people in a digital age](#)<sup>9</sup>

## Register

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**ALL Tasmanian Baptist Pastors and leaders** are encouraged to participate: [REGISTER >>>](#)<sup>10</sup>

**COST:** \$75 with a \$60 subsidy from Tas Baptists (Contact [karen@riverlands.org.au](mailto:karen@riverlands.org.au) to claim your \$60 reimbursement once you have registered)

## Regional Hubs

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[Check the info about Tasmania >>>](#)<sup>11</sup> **SOUTH** Citywide Lenah Valley | **NORTH** Riverlands Longford

## Find out more

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Read the website and be informed: [What's it all about? >>>](#)<sup>12</sup>

There are great speakers planned each session, so this is your moment to be inspired.

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<sup>8</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au/program](http://baptistsinmission.org.au/program)

<sup>9</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au/sessions/discipling-digital-natives-reaching-people-in-a-digital-age](http://baptistsinmission.org.au/sessions/discipling-digital-natives-reaching-people-in-a-digital-age)

<sup>10</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au/product/baptists-in-mission](http://baptistsinmission.org.au/product/baptists-in-mission)

<sup>11</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au/states/tas](http://baptistsinmission.org.au/states/tas)

<sup>12</sup> [baptistsinmission.org.au](http://baptistsinmission.org.au)

Tasmanian Baptist ADVANCE | step by step  
Registered by Australia Post, Publication No. TARO525, ISSN 0815-6964

Comments and submissions to Advance can be sent to:  
Email: [jenny@tasbaptists.org.au](mailto:jenny@tasbaptists.org.au)

Website: [www.tasbaptists.org.au/news](http://www.tasbaptists.org.au/news)

