

George Town Baptist Church



Church Profile

Keeping Hope Alive

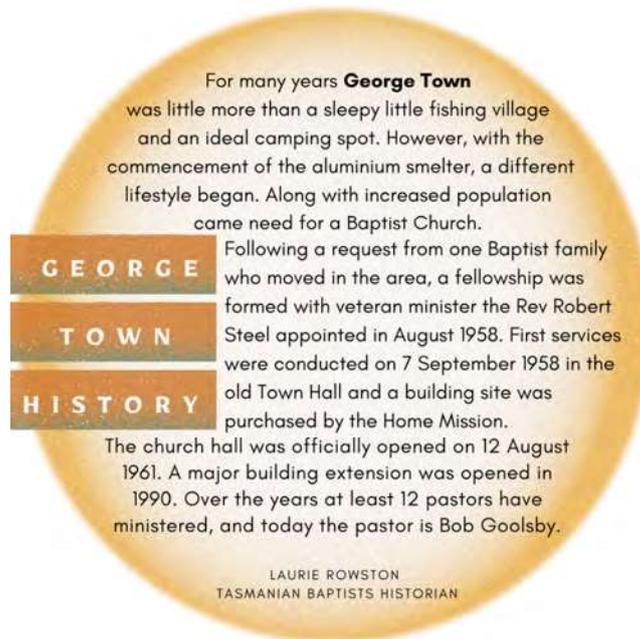
*George Town Baptist Church is like many of our regional fellowships. They hold onto hope for the future, in fellowship with other churches in the area. **Pastor Bob Goolsby** reflects on this faithful fellowship, taking the opportunity to chat to a few of the George Town Baptist members.*



There has been a Baptist Church in George Town since circa 1958. Technically, we count our establishment in 1961, so we had an uncelebrated 60th anniversary last year. We are going to have a commemoration service as soon as we think Covid conditions will allow it – might as well do it right!

When Sylvie and I arrived in George Town, we decided to look for a church to attend. The Baptist Church was small, and the first Sunday we tried to attend, they were in a service with the Uniting and Anglican Churches off premises. When we finally attended, we met a church that had heroically survived without a pastor for about eight years. Anne Godman and Pauline Heppel were keeping hope alive.

Then Anne moved to New Zealand, leaving Pauline to handle things on her own. It was not just the Baptist Church. Every church in George Town suffered declining membership and attendance during those years, but it was particularly hard to overcome the lack of a pastor. Graeme Goninon was the last pastor of record. He was loved and regarded highly by all. He left in 2010.



Better Days

Faith Millen is a faithful member who arrived in George Town from England in 1972. She recalled the better days of the church, including the years in the late 1970's and early 1980's when the Baptist Church had over 40 children in Sunday School, and a vibrant youth group.



Faith Millen

But times change, and as always, the church must re-evaluate the way it interfaces with the world around us. (I owe much of the information about the past to Faith, and Dawn Leslie, both of whom are serving as Deacons.)

Let's press in

Sylvie and I did not move to George Town to take on a church, but it seemed to be "manifest destiny". Since that time, we have made progress in reaching new people in town. Pre-Covid, things were looking up. These days we have had to retool, like everyone else. Nevertheless, all we know to do is press in.

We saw a youth ministry start, which struggled along for a while. Lately we have had an increase in attendance at the once-a-month youth meeting, which we find very exciting. Our visitation program is allowing us to become acquainted throughout the area, making friends in high places and in low ones, too.

The church is working with the Salvo's to help collect food for needy people; the Seafarer's Mission to find ways to touch people who work on the ships that come into the local harbor; and Vinnie's, where we participate in a community meal served at the local Catholic fellowship hall.

Path to growth ahead

When you are small, there are so many things you want to do, but simply cannot, because the money or the resources are not there. We are asking ourselves the same question Elisha asked a needy widow, “What do we have in our house?” If we present it, God can use it.

Thus the saying “One sows and another reaps” is true. *John 4:37*

We are growing, albeit slowly, as God brings people in. Some we reached out to in the past, and others who simply found their way to us. No matter whether our evangelistic efforts are the key, or simply continuing to be “open for business” to serve and help equip those the Lord is calling, we believe in “one sows, another waters, but God gives the increase” (John 4:36-38).

Current member Peter Gross wrote the following, that sums up our current position quite well:

I am a retired engineer, living in the George Town – Low Head area for 16 years. I started at the Baptist Church two years ago and have enjoyed worship and fellowship with others who love the Lord and long to see others find new life in Him.

Like the other churches in George Town, we are small in number but work well together in sharing times of combined worship, Bible study, outreach and building relationships with the community. As a smaller fellowship many of us wear several hats, but it is great to have the opportunity to explore our gifts and abilities in both spiritual and practical ways.



Bob and Sylvie have shown great dedication and leadership in challenging us to reach beyond our comfort zone to serve the Lord and honour Him in worship and applying the Word to our lives.

Peter Gross

Making Him known

We are also blessed to have long-standing members who have served the Lord faithfully at George Town Baptist for many decades. Their commitment to knowing the Lord and making Him known is a continuing challenge to all of us, including a youngster like me. Speaking for established, but numerically challenged Churches of Tasmania, I recall the parable of the fig tree in the vineyard. Rather than cut it down, the vinedresser (Jesus in parable form) asked for some time to give it special attention, fertilizer and time.

Obviously the first task is to secure viability. After that is accomplished, become influencers in the community. As a great leader once said, “People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care”. From that standpoint, we at George Town Baptist feel we are well situated to face the future.



Pastor Bob Goolsby

Originally from Calvary Temple in Eastern Illinois, USA, Bob Goolsby and Sylvie have pastored at George Town Baptist since 2019.



*crossover*¹

The Ungated Community



By Director of Crossover, Andrew Turner

*On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.
Matthew 16:18*

Gates are an unusual weapon. For laying siege to Christ's church, to the City of God, I'm thinking catapults, crossbows and cannons. But gates?

It says something about our culture and current mindset that we quote the verse above to reassure ourselves in the context of feeling threatened. We can feel like Jesus' kingdom is hanging by a thread, surrounded and vulnerable – in need of robust defence considering the forces aligned against us. Let's take a moment, a breath and a step back.

It says something about our society – and our witness – that when most people think about heaven, the mental picture they have is of a fenced-off resort guarded by gates (pearly) and a bouncer (Peter). That is the go-to image for cartoonists. But is it so?

Consider the Parable of the Great Banquet – the party, the servants, the invitations, the excuses, the poor, the highways and byways – you know the one. Where are the gates? Where is the bouncer? Where is the security-conscious Host so anxious to keep out the riffraff? Not there at all! Where are the shame-faced ones who got all the way to the front of the line only to be turned away? Not there either. The shame is borne by the Host when excuses are made. And His desire for the riffraff could not be more emphatic.

So where are the gates? It's true, heaven does have gates. They're right there in Revelation 21, described in pearly detail, including the pearly fact that they will never be shut. [Rev 21:25] (Surely, therefore, a better word would be entranceway?)

So where are the gates? Right there where Jesus said: It is hell that has gates, not heaven. And for 2000 years it is Satan's kingdom, not Christ's, that has been under siege. When Jesus says that the gates of Hades will not prevail over his church, he means they will not be able to withstand the church, because Jesus is surely saying that those very gates, used to trap prisoners in, will not be able to hold up against the rescuing work of his church that will press in on it in His name, with His power, by His authority and for His glory.

The constant challenge for every sacred agent is to read the world through the lens of Scripture rather than the other way around. In this case it calls us to be more confident, less defensive, and above all, re-delighted at the thoroughgoing goodness of our King and the true nobility of his mission.

What is there for us to fear or be ashamed of? There are so many captives still to find freedom, and so many outsiders to discover they are deeply wanted and sincerely invited. In a recent survey of hundreds of Australian Baptist churches, the average rating they gave themselves for evangelism was 1 out of 10. Even in these times – especially in these times – it's time for us to step up.

Please talk to your church leaders about supporting Crossover so we can expand our work of Helping Australian Baptists Share Jesus.

¹ <https://www.crossover.org.au/the-ungated-community/>

Tasmanian Baptists' Theme for 2022



It takes courage to take hold of Reengaging, Reimagining and Realigning

By Mission Director, Stephen Baxter

2022 is upon us, but it in Tasmania, it hasn't been the easiest of beginnings.

Jenny and I were blessed to attend our daughter's wedding in Spain in late December. While we were away, Tasmania's borders opened for the first time in 18 months, paving the way for the COVID virus to re-enter our state.



AJ and, our daughter, Alice, with their parents. It was an Australian-Nigerian event

By the time we returned home in the first week of January, so much had changed. Mandatory mask-wearing had become the norm, and a careful hesitancy by people meant our streets and shops felt somewhat empty.

Tasmanian churches changed over that time too. Facemasks are now mandatory for church services, although it has been the norm for many around the world for quite a while. Not surprisingly, attendance numbers are down as many, for various rational reasons, have chosen to stay home preferring online services instead.

God's promise to us

It is no understatement to say we live in trying times — for both our communities and our churches. Yet, it is in such a time like this that God promises not to leave us but to be with us. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Paul says God is the "Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles". We are all thankful for that.

"May God comfort you amid all the disruption and uncertainty you are experiencing at the moment."

This is a prayer we can pray for ourselves and each other. It is certainly my prayer for you. May God comfort you amid all the disruption and uncertainty you are experiencing at the moment.

I also pray God will use this time to continue the transformation process for all of our churches. The Bible is full of times when God has used difficulties, struggle, and even suffering, to renew the people of God.

Whether it was the wilderness experience of the Israelites fleeing Egypt for the Promised Land, or their exile experience in Babylon, or the persecution of the church in the early days by the Roman Empire, God is always at work in times such as these. Indeed, for Jews and Christians at all times, God never wastes hard times. Comfort and renewal are at work side-by-side. I trust that is true for us too.



Three critical words

In 2021 at our May Assembly, we endorsed our new strategic plan which included three key strategies: to Reengage, Reimagine and Realign.

These words are designed to help us understand and commit to what we sense God is doing among us –

- To **reengage** with the mission of God in our communities,
- To **reimagine** what church might look like as we take seriously that we are to be salt and light in our communities, and
- To **realign** the resources of our churches and union to enable us to be the church God calls us to be.

It seems to me that God is using this “COVID-moment” to help move us along the transformation path as expressed in our 3 Rs (Reengage, Reimagine and Realign). If that is correct, we can be comforted God is at work amid the challenges. And our response should be a resounding “Yes” to cooperate with God in this transformational work.

I’m not suggesting this is easy. It takes courage to say “Yes” to God.

It takes courage to trust, and courage to keep going. It takes courage to accept God’s compassion and God’s comfort. It takes courage to live with an open heart. It takes courage to love, accept and forgive. And it can take courage to comfort others. As Paul goes on to say, God comforts us, “so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” (1 Corinthians 1:4).

(en)Courage one another

Our theme for 2022 is (en)Courage.

It is an encouragement to take courage, to embrace what God is doing amongst us, and to receive God’s comfort at this time. All with a view to not just receiving courage, it but passing it on into our communities.

We’ll share more about this in the months ahead. But in the meantime, this is my prayer for you, and I trust we may pray it for each other:

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ
(1 Corinthians 1:3-5).*



Stephen Baxter
Mission Director, Tasmanian Baptists
stephen@tasbaptists.org.au

Six months on: the heartbreak in Afghanistan continues

Baptist World Aid stands ready to support emergency mobile health and nutrition clinics in Afghanistan.

Baptist World Aid¹

Six Months on: the heartbreak in Afghanistan continues

11th February 2022

Baptist World Aid stands ready to support emergency mobile health and nutrition clinics in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan still in crisis

While Afghanistan may have fallen from news headlines in Australia, the country is still in crisis.

Today more than nine million Afghan people are displaced, many of them losing their homes when the Taliban took control in August 2021.

Recent earthquakes have taken lives and destroyed hundreds of homes, while a harsh winter is forcing those in poverty – especially women and children – to choose between their next meal or staying warm. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted an already fragile healthcare system, leaving many in need of urgent care.

‘But amid such heartache, God has created an opportunity to provide hope,’ says Melissa Lipsett, CEO of Baptist World Aid.

Supporting emergency mobile health and nutrition clinics

Using funds given through our ongoing [Crisis Appeal](#)², Baptist World Aid stands ready to support emergency mobile health and nutrition clinics in the southern regions of Afghanistan.

The clinics will provide Afghans with humanitarian aid, including:

- Primary health care focusing on women and children
- Safe pregnancy deliveries, antenatal and postnatal care
- Psychosocial support to care for people’s mental health and wellbeing
- Screening and treatment for malnutrition
- Behaviour-changing activities focused on health, nutrition and hygiene – to reduce the incidence of disease and save lives.

Through the generosity of God’s people, since Baptist World Aid launched an appeal six months ago, we have been able to assist our Christian Partners in providing help for Afghans in need.

This includes providing a monthly cash assistance for displaced families on the Afghanistan and Pakistan border to buy food and household essentials. We also gave families money to purchase winter kits with blankets, mattresses, pillows, plastic sheets and warm clothes.

¹ <https://baptistworldaid.org.au/2022/02/11/afghanistan-six-months-on/>

² <https://baptistworldaid.org.au/appeals/afghanistan-crisis-appeal/>

Crisis in Afghanistan far from over

The crisis is far from over. Decades of instability – compounded by the Taliban’s takeover and an ongoing pandemic – has created a desperate situation for many families forced to flee their homes.

Around 80 percent of those displaced are women and children.

If we are to take our faith and shared humanity seriously, Melissa says we must speak up for those who are vulnerable and ‘can’t speak for themselves.’

‘But speaking also needs to be translated into effective and generous actions, and that means increasing our humanitarian response and refugee intake for Afghan families,’ she says.

Six months on, the heartbreak continues – but so does hope. It is imperative that Australians continue to grapple with this humanitarian crisis and provide help.

GIVE TO AFGHANISTAN CRISIS APPEAL:

<https://baptistworldaid.org.au/appeals/afghanistan-crisis-appeal/>

Praying for Alice



A Lifetime of Praying



By Jenny Baxter, Tasmanian Director, EmpowHe

What do you do when the answers don't seem to be coming?

While my life flashed before my eyes, I sat in the Spanish winter sunshine, nervously waiting for the bride, our Alice, to be given away.

Well, it wasn't *my* life exactly. It was pieces of Alice's life I'd kept close in my heart. Moments I had participated in, helped with, and cried over.

"The memories flickered through my mind like precious flowers, once fresh but now pressed, faded and time-worn."

FLASH: Her traumatic assisted delivery, after an almost-C-section.

FLASH: The trip to Canada before she could even crawl.

FLASH: Sitting in piano lessons, piano lessons, piano lessons.

FLASH: Tears over a nasty gravel graze, her first week on a bike.

FLASH: Her first grown-up hairdo, Grade Six graduation night.

FLASH: Torn, watching her lag at the back of a pack of high-schoolgirls, convinced she was born to lead.

FLASH: Goodbyes on the bus, leaving home for Victoria, little knowing she was really on her way to France, via Sydney and Japan!

The memories flickered through my mind like precious flowers, once fresh but now pressed, faded and time-worn. Compressed into short minutes.

And the prayers. Especially, I remembered the prayers. So many for this very moment. This day, when she would promise: To have and to hold from this day forward.

Praying for Alice – and the switch

Prayer is a commitment I made to my children as each was born. I pray for them all, regularly. As well, I committed to pray for each one's life-partner as both halves were forming and founding, maturing and mellowing, living and learning. What better time to sow into their lives until the two became one? Granted, I didn't know who those partners would be. But God did.

For well over three decades, I prayed for Alice, and her as-yet unknown husband. Where was he? What had happened to him? My hope wore out.

Only a year ago, Alice had given up. But during one Zoom call, from somewhere deep down, I found the words to encourage her to keep believing he would materialise. Tearily, she'd agreed. But only when remembering the letter her close-to-death grandfather had written 13 years ago, for opening on this very day.

It's hard to believe it was only 10 months since I'd switched up my praying. Inspired by the story of Isaac and Rebekah in Genesis 24, I stopped asking for a husband. Instead, I audaciously asked for Alice to be the answer to someone else's prayer.

The most unexpected answer

And here he was. My soon to be son-in-law, AJ. Arthur Jnr. Standing with the minister, patiently waiting for Alice. He was everything I had hoped for, and nothing like I expected.

I didn't know he would be Nigerian-American. Or that he would live in Spain. Or that Alice would move to France to work with YWAM, and now Spain, to join him for their new future. How little I knew!

But those qualities. They were everything I had prayed for. Faithful. Caring. Believing. Strong. Determined. Loving. Kind.

Her moment had come. That prayer from her birth, now answered before my very eyes. God's magnificent answer.

And then came Alice on her Dad's arm! Jessica's Theme* melodically bringing an undeniably Aussie flavour, and tears to my eyes. She was ready. In love. Looking gorgeous and dewy-eyed. Having waited all those years.

Here was the culmination of a lifetime of prayer. Pinching myself this was all real, I was so aware it was a moment I will savour forever, that morning in the wintry Spanish sunshine. It was an ending and a beginning. The old and the new. The faded and the fresh.

My prayers for Alice and her future husband, are now complete.
Thank you God!



But, you know, there is more to come. From here on, I pray for Alice and her newfound family.



Alice and AJ

Alice's life in pictures



Alice at 2



Alice at 4



Alice at 10
Our family complete



Alice at 12, in Grade 6



Alice at 14



Alice at 17



Alice at 24



Alice at 29



Alice at 32



Nigerian ceremony



Alice at 34.
It is done! Time to celebrate.



This story was first published in HEARTLANDS Summer 21-22, the quarterly e-mail news for EmpowHer, an activity of Tasmanian Baptist Women.

SUBSCRIBE HERE: <http://eepurl.com/gGEAYT>

EmpowHer

ReCharge NEWS



February 2022

Tamar Island Walk & Picnic, 27th Feb

An EmpowHer Event

All women are welcome to join the Tamar Island Walk and Picnic, 12:30-2:30pm, Sunday 27th February 2022.

The Tamar Island walk is a short 4km return boardwalk, just 10 minutes drive from the heart of Launceston.

It will begin with a BYO picnic. Please also bring a picnic rug &/or chair, as tables are limited.

This is an all-access walk and children are welcome under your supervision.

MORE INFO/REGISTER:

Wendy 0407 675 414; or Belinda 0408 267 188



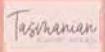
EmpowHer
all women welcome

TAMAR ISLAND WALK & PICNIC

Sunday 27th Feb 12.30 - 2.30 pm

Tamar Island is a short 4km return boardwalk, just 10mins drive from the heart of Launceston. Join us for a BYO picnic to kick off the year (also BYO blanket and/or chair – tables are limited). This walk is all-access friendly and kids are welcome under your supervision.

FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER, CONTACT:
WENDY 0407 675 414
BELINDA 0408 267 188



Nationwide Prayer Gathering

Prayer Gathering of Australian Baptists

Please join your Baptist family at 7:45pm on Tuesday 1st March for a Zoom prayer gathering.

We will pray for God to work within our lives, our families, our churches, our communities our Baptists partners, our States/Territories, our nation, and our world.

We especially want to pray for our BaptCare family as they battle COVID outbreaks in aged care facilities, and support exhausted staff.

As well we will pray for the situation in Myanmar, for the people of Tonga, and for the unfolding situation in the Ukraine.

REGISTER: bit.ly/ABMpraywithus22



Leading with Courage – Muster

For Tas Baptist Pastors and Leaders

WHEN: Lunchtime Monday – Lunchtime Tuesday March 7-8, 2022

WHERE: Hobart Baptist Church

WHO: Appointed key leaders of Tasmanian Baptist churches
WELCOME!

With great pleasure and expectation, Tasmanian Baptist pastors and key church leaders are invited to the upcoming Pastors' Muster, 7th-8th March 2022.

Gathering together as leaders never fails to be a rich time.

With just 24hrs together, some big conversations will focus on the importance of *leading with courage*.

We will create a safe to share with others – a courageous aspect of leadership. For this reason, only pastors, and leaders of churches without a pastor, have received invitations.

MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER!

If you are missing your invite email please contact:
jenna@tasbaptists.org.au



At the Muster in Sept 2021

Recent Inductions

Exciting times for Tasmanian Baptist Churches

It has been an unprecedented few weeks, as five pastors were inducted during January and February, 2022. They are **Dan Hutchison** (Newstead), **Matt Henderson** (Hobart), **Liam Conway** (Riverlands); **Jeff Percival** (Lower Barrington); and **Dan Evenhuis** (Citywide).



Dan Evenhuis, Citywide



Liam Conway, with Hannah, Riverlands



Jeff and Ann Percival with daughter Anitra, and Stephen Baxter at Lwr Barrington



Jeff Percival, Lwr Barrington



Daniel Hutchison, Newstead



Matt Henderson, with Kylie, Hobart

Welcome LIAM AND HANNAH!

New Associate Pastor for Riverlands

Liam Conway joined Riverlands Christian Community as Associate Pastor and was inducted by Maddy Svoboda at Riverlands on 6th February 2022. The service was followed by a BBQ lunch. A very special morning, it was wonderful to see many visitors who came in support of both Liam and Hannah, as they join the Riverlands family.

Please pray Liam and Hannah will settle in well with the Riverlands church family, but also the wider community of Longford.

Safer Spaces Toolkit

Australian Baptist Ministries pull together to create a great resource

In 2021, ABM recognised domestic abuse resources are often available only by region, and wanted to create a resource which could be accessed by any pastor anywhere, with access to the Internet. The outcome is now available as a resource for use in localities across Australia.

Baptist women from around the country made up the project working group. Between them, they have expertise in pastoral leadership, theology, teaching, domestic abuse and project management.

Together they created the Safer Spaces Toolkit:
standagainstdv.net >



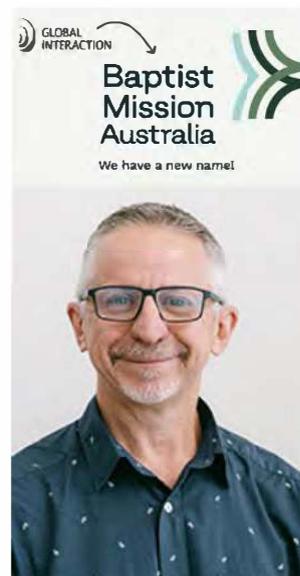
GLOBAL LAUNCH: 16th February Baptist Mission Australia

Global Interaction has become Baptist Mission Australia

One of the nation's oldest mission organisations has changed its name as it looks to strengthen its partnership with Baptist churches across Australia and international partners around the globe.

Executive Director Scott Pilgrim (pictured) said, "just as we prayed at this year's Global Launch, will you join me in praying "Come Holy Spirit"? May we pray that prayer over our lives, churches, teams and mission community."

Find out more from www.baptistmission.australia.org



Newstead Farewells Marion Sherriff

27 July 1935 – 16 January 2022

Marion was born on the 27th July 1935, and went peacefully to be with her Lord on the 16th January 2022. She spent over 70 years of her life living in Launceston in the suburb of Newstead, as a child and then for most of her married life.

Marion was farewelled on the 21st January from Newstead Baptist.

Marion and her sisters attended Newstead Baptist where they attended Sunday School, Camps and Church. It was there that Marion came to a faith and belief in Jesus Christ as her Saviour. At Newstead, she also met Edward Humphrey 'Ted' Sherriff and they married in the church on the 26th May, 1956. Ted later became the President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania.

Marion loved God in a deep and personal way. She loved God's Word, the Bible. Coming to church, for Marion, meant learning about God, meeting with God, and singing together to rejoicing with God's people. It brought her happiness and gave her strength through life's sorrows and disappointments.

Added to family duties of raising four children, Marion was a faithful member at Newstead Baptist for over 60 years serving through Sunday School Teaching, Christian Endeavour, the Missionary Committee, Ladies' Meetings like Homemakers and Baptist Women's Fellowship, Chat'n'Choose creche co-ordinator, hospitality and more.

Marion will be sadly missed by her 'loved' Ted, and many family members. We know that she is now at peace and in no pain with her Lord.



Ted and Marion Sherriff

Christian Life & Witness Courses

Training to sharpen your evangelism skills

WHEN: 21st February to 12th March 2022

WHERE: In various churches in the Launceston and Hobart regions, including Baptist churches in **Westbury, Perth, Launceston (Gateway), George Town** and **Hobart**.

The Christian Life and Witness Course helps believers deepen their faith in Jesus Christ and share Him with others. Specifically, during the Tasmania Celebration with Will Graham in May 2022. But also, on their own as they witness to friends, family members and co-workers

During the two-hour/week, three-week course, participants will learn:

- Biblical principles on living a life that pleases God and points other people to Him.
- Practical tips and advice about sharing Jesus Christ with people who do not yet know Him.
- How to best support new Christians and help them grow in their faith.



tasmaniaccelebration.org.au

Tasmanian Baptist Key Dates, 2022

Dates for your Diary

7-8 March 2022	Pastors' Muster in Hobart
26 March 2022	Council Meeting
6-7 May 2022	Mid-Year Assembly at <u>Riverlands</u>
18 June 2022	Council Meeting
26-27 July 2022	Musters: Regional with PM
10 September 2022	sessions Council Meeting
3-5 October 2022	Muster: Pastors and Families
28-29 October 2022	Annual Assembly, <u>Riverlands</u>
19 November 2022	Council Meeting



Some attendees, Assembly Oct 2021.

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Tasmanian Baptist ReCharge

Comments and submissions can be sent to:

Email: jenny@tasbaptists.org.au

Website: www.tasbaptists.org.au

