

We recently elected some new members to expand our Pastoral Search Committee, as we continue to look for a new pastor to eventually replace David Marshall.

David Marshall has begun preaching through the Gospel of Luke in the morning services and has completed a series of messages on the Attributes of God in the evening services. Dominic Tennant is preaching through the Gospel of John on a monthly basis.

Our Sunday School, Craft outreach and Bible Studies have now gone into recess for the Summer holiday period.

—WEST CHURCH PLANT OF SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH, AUCKLAND—

The West church plant has its final Tuesday meeting on December 15 and on Sunday December 20 meets for the last time for the year in the cafe. We will be singing a few carols outside the cafe and talking to people passing by. We hope to resume Sunday meetings in the cafe on February 7 when we have all returned from our holidays. At this point in time, the cafe is key since it demands a degree of flexibility and boldness before strangers that we would not need were we to withdraw to the safety of a hall of some kind.

On Tuesday December 1 we met with the elders of Shore Baptist and had a good discussion on our way forward as a church plant. There were twenty of us present, besides the elders. Not all of those twenty are settled in NZ. However, their contribution at this time is tremendously important to us. They encourage within us hope. And hope is what is especially needed as we look into an uncertain future.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The newsletter of the Fellowship of Reformed Baptist Churches in New Zealand

December 2015

———— BAYS BAPTIST CHURCH, AUCKLAND ————

Firstly, we want to give a BIG THANKS to all the churches in the RB fellowship who have supported Bays Baptist this year. We really appreciate this and give our thanks to you.

Our preaching series in 1 Peter has started recently and we plan to spend some time working through this letter. For our Christmas service, the kids from Sunday School ministry (led by Hannah van Ballegooy) will be performing an item. We are very much looking forward to this. A number of other ministries have entered a season of holiday rest, including home group. Weather permitting, we are providing a free sausage sizzle at the beach on Saturday (12 Dec). This is one opportunity for us to be present in the local community

From all of us at Bays, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

———— CROSSPOINT CHURCH, PALMERSTON NORTH ————

2015 has seen us work through the first seven chapters of the Gospel of Luke on Sunday mornings: it is such familiar territory, with vistas of the life, miracles and teaching of Christ that we have viewed so many times before. And yet, while we've stopped at these view-points on previous journeys, the light is different each time and the scene reveals little details we had not noticed before. These are days of ordinary incremental growth in knowledge, understanding, application, love and devotion.

We have also worked our way through the whole of Leviticus on Sunday evenings this year. In contrast to Luke, this is unfamiliar territory. As we round every corner the scene presented is puzzling and even disturbing at first. We have to tread more carefully. Yet we know to look for Christ in all the Scriptures, and with care we see him here: here he is in the sacrificial lamb, here he is in the festal gatherings, here he is in the priestly routines. Over and over again we encounter Christ in the shadows, and see the beauty of the unfolding revelation of God in his plan to reclaim, redeem and renew. With slow and sometimes faltering progress in our understanding we have nevertheless been led to an ever increasing appreciation for the plan of God in our salvation.

On Wednesday evenings we have been making slow and often interrupted progress through the Baptist Catechism: these are truths long accepted by the church, the 'old paths' that—while often neglected today—have been well trodden and proven true. These logical questions, and carefully crafted answers lead us again and again to bow awestruck in the presence of the glory of our graciously sovereign God.

And now we are on the threshold of the annual routines of the Christmas and New Year season: to celebrate the birth of Christ and proclaim his saving grace as we have done each December for over a decade in this city, and then to enter into another year with its weekly cycle of preaching, praying and living for Christ that we hope will be edifying to our souls, fruitful in salvation and glorifying to our God and Saviour.

————— **GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, CHRISTCHURCH** —————

Over the past two months our focus in the preaching of the Word and our Bible studies has been on the theme of 'Biblical Church Life'. Our prayer is that we will be helped to live and serve together to the glory of God in 2016. (Ephesians 4:25-5:2, Philippians 1:27-2:4) Some in the church have also had the privilege of holding fortnightly 'Cooking and English' evenings for overseas students (hosted by the McGarvey and Moore households) over recent months. Some of these students have also come along to our Sunday services.

January will see two weddings in our fellowship - Reuben & Rebecca (9th) and Theo & Olivia (23rd). We rejoice with these couples and pray that the Lord will strengthen, direct and bless their marriages for His glory. Then, from 5-8 February, we look forward to our combined Canterbury Reformed Baptist Camp with our brethren from Rolleston Baptist Church and Covenant Grace Baptist, Timaru and others from further afield. Mike Prodigalidad (Stanmore Baptist, Sydney) will be our speaker over this weekend.

————— **GRACENET COMMUNITY CHURCH, WELLINGTON** —————

We have just come through a very busy season as a church. A large part of this has definitely had to do with our hosting of the Acts 29 conference (during November). It has, without a doubt, stretched and challenged us at many different levels. This being said, we are very happy with the way that it went and feel humbled to have had the opportunity to serve the wider body in this way. Just after the Acts 29 conference, we hosted the final Roving Classroom (Ministry Training Program) of the year. It was the third Greek class of the program so far, and we were able to spend the day taking a big-picture look at the Greek noun system. On the issue of ministry training, we are also happy to report that Ryan Vinten (one of the students at the

final roving class) is coming to the end of his six month full-time internship at Gracenet. This will formally come to a close at the end of Dec, with his assessment by the elders of the church. In this regard, we are excited to meet and pray together at the end of the month even as we consider the next steps going forward as a church.

————— **SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH, AUCKLAND** —————

Let's start off by wishing you all a blessed Christmas as we remember the birth of our precious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! The past year at Shore Baptist Church has been one of much grace and excitement. The West Church Plant is now meeting regularly on Sunday evenings in New Lynn and we have officially appointed Steve Turner to lead the work until such time as we find a permanent church planter/pastor. The work is steady and those involved are really committed and very faithful in this ministry.

We have also appointed Aaron Falconer as our 3rd elder at SBC during a recent members meeting. We are looking forward to see him grow in this office and already appreciate the gifts he brings into our current eldership.

We are still experiencing a constant flow of new families and singles attending our church and as I've mentioned before, this brings a particular set of challenges for us as a congregation. We now have people who drive over an hour to get to church, from as far as Mangawhai. To serve them and others during the week in the context of care groups, is an obvious challenge that we constantly pray and think about. Saying that, we are so thankful to see them so committed to the Word of God and the love they have for the church.

The 2nd Anchored Young Adult Retreat at Piha was a huge blessing to all who attended. Thanks for promoting this in your churches and a special thanks for those from the South Island who flew up to join old friends! Speaking of camps, Shore Baptist and Bays Baptist will, Lord willing, join in a combined church camp from the 26th to 28th of February. We are looking forward to closer fellowship between our churches.

God's richest blessings to you all. We love the fellowship we share with you!

————— **TRINITY REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH, HAMILTON** —————

We recently began a weekly Sunday morning prayer meeting that prays for God's blessing upon the services and other activities of the church. Johann du Toit was welcomed into church membership at our first communion service in December.

Jeff and Annette Lane (OMF/TSCF Auckland) visited the church in November. We are delighted to be able to support this couple in their work with international students.