

## "Let us walk in the light of the Lord" Isaiah 2:5

This week's lectionary readings invite us into the Advent season, a time of anticipation grounded in a hope manifested in the divinity of Christ incarnated, resurrected and his promised return.

I am always deeply inspired by the imagery of light breaking into darkness. Light is used through the biblical narrative to describe the hope God brings into the world and a charge to the people of God to embody it in their witness.

In the anticipation of the coming of the Lord, we are reminded of the urgency of his impending arrival (Matt 24: 36-44), but not knowing exactly when that will be. Isaiah prepares God's people with a beautiful image of announcing God's pending reign – division and conflict are transformed into unity and peace. A new day is coming and it is God who initiates it. The invitation is for God's people to be in perpetual readiness for the coming reign by submitting to instruction from God's word, transforming weapons into tools for cultivating life, turning attention away from war and conflict and towards reconciliation and peace.

The Apostle Paul celebrates the passing away of darkness and the anticipation of a new day now that salvation is nearer to us than when we first became believers (Rom 13:11-14), so dress yourselves in the light.

The light that broke into the darkness through the incarnation of the Word becoming flesh, broke into our human existence in all its vulnerability and frailty. But the darkness did not overcome it. The incarnated Christ was crucified, suffered and died,

but the darkness still did not overcome the light. The light of the Lord in all its glory is revealed in the resurrection of Christ who overcomes sin, darkness and death. The darkness continues to creep in unwelcome and uninvited, but as children of the light who anticipate the coming reign of God's kingdom, the darkness still cannot overcome the light.

Our invitation to walk in the light of the Lord is to walk in the resurrection hope, both realised and anticipated. We serve a living God who continues to create the church through the power of the Holy Spirit as we walk in the light of the Lord. We're invited to be open to transformation, anticipate the new day God is bringing into existence and live in such a way that God's reign has already taken place within us.

2020 brings forth a new season for Churches of Christ in SA & NT. There are many things we have to look forward to individually, within our own communities and as a Movement of churches together. As we anticipate these many things, let us anticipate the reign of Christ in our lives and the world in which we live, so we can be ready for what God wants to do in us and through us.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Mark Riessen  
Acting State Minister



# COCOA Christmas Offering Bringing Breakthrough



Since gaining independence, South Sudan has struggled with war and violence. Parents and children have been torn apart. Hundreds of thousands have been killed. Half the population suffers hunger, because they don't have the stability to grow food. South Sudan needs a breakthrough.

Garang is one of the Board members of the LAID Foundation of South Sudan (LAFOSS). He grew up in Sudan, during the second Sudanese Civil War. When he was just a boy, his family was forced to flee their home. *"We walked night and day in the bush,"* Garang says, *"in the grass and in the thorny places. I got pierced. My soles now are spottish. I don't want this mark to be in soles of others."*

This experience is why he is passionate about the LAFOSS Peace Project. By working with community leaders, churches and schools, LAFOSS is helping make breakthroughs in their country through establishing 'Peace Clubs' in local schools. Leaders from each school are trained to resolve differences without violence. They take these skills back to their schools and teach peace building to their classmates. The attitudes of the next generation are changing through these projects. The young people of South Sudan can break through the division of the past.

COCOA partners with projects all around the world to help enable breakthroughs; but breakthrough looks different for everyone!

Breakthrough for a family in Bangladesh is a safe and hygienic sanitation system.

Breakthrough for a Zimbabwean family is a loan to start a small business, so they can take care of an abandoned child.

And breakthrough for South Sudan is building a grassroots movement for peace.

You can enable breakthroughs in people's lives

this Christmas! Your gift will empower them to break free of poverty! You might also like to include a note of encouragement for our partners.

**Find out more information, and give a**



**breakthrough today, by going to**  
[www.gmp.org.au/breakthrough](http://www.gmp.org.au/breakthrough)

## Vietnam Discovery Visit – March 2019

GMP is inviting expressions of interest from those who would like to be part of a Partner Discovery Team visit to Vietnam 10 – 17 March 2020.

The aim of this visit is to:

- see and experience life in Vietnam
- be an encouragement to our partners and learn more about the issues they are facing

This visit will include:

- Spending time with Fiona Briers as she shares her story and the challenges of life in Vietnam
- Sharing life and hearing stories of transformation from the ladies who have gained skills and employment at Bright Solutions
- Seeing each step in how Bright Solutions products are designed and made
- Spending time with a local pastor and hearing the stories and challenges of ministry
- Worship in an international church in Vietnam
- Sightseeing in Ho Chi Minh City and beyond

Cost is estimated to be around \$2,500.

If you are interested in this potential GMP Vietnam Discovery Visit please contact Val Zerna - [val@gmp.org.au](mailto:val@gmp.org.au) or ring 8352 3466.

## State Convention – The Pres's Perspective

As Cleve Brisbane and I headed back to Murray Bridge after the 16<sup>th</sup> November's AGM and Communion I felt firstly, a great sense of relief that Convention was over for another year, and more importantly, a sense of gratitude to God, and everyone, who had in some way participated in this year's program which had begun back on the Wednesday evening with the G. R. Stirling Lecture.

As people will hopefully appreciate, there is a lot of hard work which goes on behind the scenes in order for Convention to happen. For Convention 2019, this began back in December last year when a committee under the authority of State Board, was appointed to oversee arrangements for this year's event. (As I write this, the committee is meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> December for a debrief session because we can't sit back on our laurels; we want Convention to be the best it can be.) The theme '*Forward in Faith*' was most appropriate. As was explained by Phil McCredden, the person charged with helping us to move forward as churches through Stage 2 of the Review process, the focus needs to be on 'Imagining a New Future.' It's here that I want to use the term '*interdependence*', because while each of our 55 churches have their own identity, we need to realize that it is important for us to also have a corporate awareness of who we are as Churches of Christ in S.A. & N.T. To be together with one another at Convention helps us to appreciate this.

Part of this awareness involves people appreciating the ministry of CareWorks and Life Care. These two entities, as we saw and heard on Thursday night and then on Saturday morning, are

actively involved in making a difference in people's lives. How important it is to pray for these two bodies as well as for one another in our respective cultural contexts!

Everyone was aware that State Board had been looking for a new State Minister and it was most pleasing to see people's response to the video of Peter Barney, the person from W.A. whose name has been put forward to take on this role. To have Peter come on board is part of the excitement of what God has in store for us as we move forward in faith.

In reflecting upon all that happened during the course of the four days of Convention, I would again express my sincere thanks to Scott Combridge who has done a great job for the past two years as our Executive Officer (interim) as well as the State Office team. I would also say a special "Thank you" to everyone who assisted in some way to make this year's Convention such a special and positive occasion. To have the number of delegates and interested people who attended was indeed pleasing to see.

This year's Convention is one we can celebrate with gratitude and praise to God. As we head into another year with its challenges and opportunities, I am greatly encouraged. As the psalmist says, "... *God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ... it is good to be near God.*" May this be our reality as we move '*Forward in Faith*.'

Grant Spangenberg



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The **Berri Church of Christ** wishes to thank the Churches and individuals who have made generous gifts of money to wards our Men's Shed Building.

Currently, our plans have been drawn up and presented to the Berri Council for approval.

This project has been fully accepted and voted on by our congregation.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Matthews

Secretary/Treasurer, Berri Church of Christ

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Christmas can be tough. For some it is a reminder of sadness and loss, for some it will be desperately lonely, and for some the expectations and financial burdens are impossible to face.

Each year, supporters just like you make an amazing difference in the lives of so many by partnering with CareWorks to offer hope and practical kindness to people for whom Christmas looms like a dark cloud.

Once again your support will provide some 300 food and toy hampers to Domestic Violence shelters where abused and broken families find refuge.

In this way we will support hundreds of women and children in desperate situations.

**Your help will ensure that this hands-on compassion continues.**

Cash donations enable CareWorks to purchase prepacked hampers from Foodbank and, of course, gifts of toys are essential to the success of this program.

Donations of toys must be received by Friday December 6th, in time to sort and deliver them to

the Domestic Violence shelters in plenty of time for Christmas.

To give on line go to [www.givenow.com.au/careworkssa](http://www.givenow.com.au/careworkssa) or use the donation slip that accompanied this newsletter.

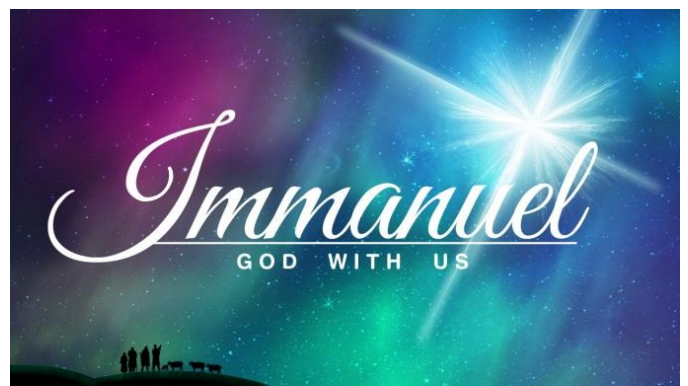
Thank you so much for your generous support.

**And...**

**Thank you for your love, kindness and support.**

CareWorks does what it does only through the amazing generosity of its supporters. So to the donors, the volunteers, the pray-ers, and the advocates – thank you for bring so much light into dark places.

May you have a truly blessed and safe Christmas and New Year season.



### **State Office Christmas/New Year Closure**

*Please note that the State Office  
will be closed from*

**5pm on Thursday, 19th December**

*and will reopen at*

**9am on Monday 6th January.**

**Thank you.**



**The Morialta Charitable Trust Fund** has been supporting disadvantaged Children, Young People and their families in South Australia through its annual program of Distributions for 40 years. To enable the Fund to continue this support through Community Organisations in South Australia, Morialta Charitable Trust Fund seeks donations from the public.

Donations of \$2 and above are Tax Deductible and can be forwarded to the Morialta Charitable Trust Fund at PO Box 92, Crafers SA 5152.

**Strathalbyn Church of Christ** will be hosting **Creation Ministries International** at the church on 22nd March 2020.

10.30am—worship service

6.30pm—open meeting

Speaker: Dr Ron Neller

For further information, contact:

Glenys Thompson on 8536 2642 or 0405 109 849

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