



What's in This Newsletter?

Highlights from the last couple of months including my first **Christmas** in Australia, a trip to the **Outback**, the start of a **New Year**, and more!

Thank the Lord for bringing me through **my first year** Down Under! I've learned a lot but have a lot more to learn. With a good foundation laid, *I'm praying God will help me, Pastor Manny, and the church to move forward in 2024 especially in regards to the youth, young adults and outreach.*

Summer Christmas

This past Christmas was my first summer Christmas! I'm thankful to report that the church's **Christmas carol and play outreach** went well, and we saw a number of guests from the community. It was a successful way for the church family to invite friends and family to hear the gospel.

Now here's a story for you...

The same weekend of the Christmas play, we had a young couple from Mexico visit our church. They are prospective missionaries and were doing a survey trip. Because we have a Mexican family in our church, they were connected with us.

When they came to the play, they were able to bring another **Mexican lady** that they had met on the plane coming over from Mexico. After they left the play, the wife was able to lead the lady to the Lord! We prayed for souls to be saved as a result of the play, but we didn't expect God to use the play as part of bringing a Mexican lady to Christ!

Going Outback

In December, I was able to go to Broken Hill, New South Wales, which is around 10 hours driving from Melbourne, to help some friends with a **holiday kids' club** (similar to VBS). Aussie schools take a break from mid-December to late-January. So it's a good time for a kids' club.

During my stay in Broken Hill, I was able to teach at the kids' club, distribute tracts with others from Sydney who came to help as well, and preach for the church. All in all, it was a good, enjoyable time in which we were able to share the gospel with around 15-20 kids. A few of the kids were actually from Tasmania and there on holiday. It was good to be able to reach these kids even though their parents are not interested in church.

Youth Camp

In January, I was able to take **two teen boys** to summer youth camp. The week had its challenges, but I am so thankful that God's love showed through in a pretty remarkable way and influenced lives. The Lord gave me the opportunity to minister to "Cabin 8," and I was able to have good conversations with some of the boys.

After camp, I kept in contact with one of the teens that I took, but he's since moved and his guardians have not contacted us about coming to church. It was a bit disappointing, but I know he's in the Lord's hands, and I'm thankful for the seeds planted.

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Unique Opportunity

This January, a couple in our church held an Opening and Blessing Ceremony for a business venture that they have begun. They invited employees, friends, a local member of the state legislature, and others. I was allowed to open the ceremony in prayer, and Pastor gave a challenge to everyone. We were thankful for this opportunity to exalt Christ in this unique setting, and prayerfully, this will lead to ongoing ministry opportunities.

February

This month, Pastor Manny is taking leave. He has not had much time off for six years. So it's a great thing that he is taking the time to refresh and recharge. In his absence, I have been tasked with filling in for him.

The first weekend he was away, God brought **my neighbor, Jack**, to our men's breakfast on Saturday as well as **a couple unbelievers** to church on Sunday and they told me that they were challenged by the message. I'm praying God will continue to speak to their hearts.

Then on Wednesday, I felt God wanted me to try to connect with my neighbor, Tracy, in unit 1. I'm in unit 4. Tracy didn't answer, but Jack saw me and came out to chat. Since one of the men of the church was giving him a bike, he decided to come to church to ask about the bike. Plus, he feels he needs God in his life. So he came to the midweek prayer meeting! We gave him a bike and a Bible. **Please pray for Jack**, and for me to be a good influence on him.

Finally, I just learned today that a lady who lives near to our church is having some health difficulties. I thought I would mention this because she needs Christ, and maybe this trial will open her heart to Christ. I'm praying we can show to her Christ's love through deeds as well as the gospel.

Looking ahead

February has me "holding down the fort" while Pastor is away, but I am also working toward an **Easter promotion** as well as a **combined youth and young adults fellowship** with some other Baptist churches in the surrounding areas. I appreciate your prayers for wisdom and God's blessing as I seek to do what He wants.

P.S. Please do not post this information or these pictures online. Thank you!

In Christ,

Joshua Zacharias

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