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Clearing the Way for Jesus

The newsletter of **Five Islands Christian Ministries** links Christians and churches from Helensburgh to Gerroa to promote church unity. Printer-friendly 2 x A4 PDF files of the newsletter may be downloaded from www.5icm.org.au/resources.html.

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One in Christ

The New Testament speaks of Christians being members of God's family (Eph 1:5; 2:19; 5:1; Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 3:1-2; Rom 8:14-17). But churches are hesitant about accepting other churches as members of God's family. Lesslie Newbigin in "The Household of God" observed that both protestants and Catholics have difficulty embracing ecumenism. Protestants accept that, although they separate themselves from one another, Christ is not divided, and he has called them all into his family. But they are not willing to accept any changes to their denominational positions. They might accept a federation of churches, but that would be disastrous for church unity. For the Catholic church, the dilemma is that in believing it is the one visible fellowship, it cannot regard other churches as churches. The problem is the presence of Christ in other churches cannot be denied without sinning against the Holy Spirit. We need to find a solution. Newbigin wrote these things in 1953. We will look at the Vatican II response next time.

When, in 2016, I suggested the churches of the Illawarra covenant together as proposed by the National Council of Churches in Australia, only a few churches signed covenants. I found little understanding of, or interest in, ecumenism. In future editions of this newsletter, I will clarify the issues. The Spirit of God desires revival in the Illawarra, but our churches hamper his work by our disunity.

Illawarra Church News

- 1. Church moves: Gospel Mission Church** has moved its meetings to the old Presbyterian Church at 15 Maynes Parade, Unanderra. **New Wine Life Church** has moved its meetings to Unanderra Community Centre on the corner of Factory Rd & Princes Hwy, Unanderra. **Testimony Church** now meets at University of Wollongong, Building 11, Northfields Ave.
- 2. Jonathan and Nicole Hyratt** have ended their church planting effort in Albion Park and are establishing an evangelistic outreach ministry. Jono is open to coming to your church, youth group, motorcycle club, etc. to share his story of freedom from addiction.
- 3. Anthony Rewak** of **St Patrick's Catholic Church Port Kembla** has been farewelled to commence his first year of priestly formation, which normally takes 7 years, at the Seminary of the Good Shepherd in Homebush.
- 4. St Michael's Anglican Cathedral Senior Assistant Minister, Liam Shannon** has been ordained as a Presbyter, which means he could be called as a church rector. Also at St Michael's, **Matt Shannon** formerly Families' Pastor (Kids & Youth) at Minchinbury Anglican Church has joined the staff as Youth Minister.
- 5. Welcome Rev. Andrew Satchell** as the new senior minister of **Kiama Presbyterian Church**. Andrew was previously at Devonport/Don/Stanley Presbyterian Church, Tasmania.
- 6. I missed a couple of senior minister changes: Ps Jordan Shanks** came to **Dapto Baptist Church** last year and **Fr Anastasios Bozikis** is at **St Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church**,

Wollongong. Please let me know of any ministry changes at your church so I can let the wider church know.

- 7. Lyn Brown of Albion Park Uniting Church** has prepared a report on **Samaritan's Purse** activity in Ukraine and the Illawarra's contribution of shoeboxes. [Download here.](#)
- 8.** As regular and single events are starting up again for 2023, please check your church's events listed on the [5icm website](#) and send me any corrections that need to be made. I will start advertising events with the next newsletter.

5icm News

- 1. Wollongong Gospel Choir** rehearsals will not recommence before May due to key choir members being on vacation during the first term of school. Rehearsals are normally held in school term times at 7:00 p.m. Tuesdays at Wollongong Senior Citizens Centre, 192 Gipps Road, Gwynneville. The choir is taking bookings for later in 2023. Choir bookings are free. For further information, see the WGC [Facebook group](#) or WGC [website](#).
- 2. Gary Hetherington** is preparing for his outreach in Canowindra now that his wife, Kim, has been healed of cancer by the Lord (more about that later). Gary and Kim are soon to be ordained for their ministry by Full Gospel Australia.
- 3.** The next issue of ***Clearing the Way for Jesus* newsletter** will be sent on **Tuesday 21st February**. I will try to email the newsletter more frequently than once a month so that events with shorter notice can be advertised. Please send me church news items, prayer requests, and combined church events to share with Christians of the Illawarra. To subscribe to this newsletter please email or message me on Facebook with your email address.

God bless,
Derek Thompson,
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a registered charity.

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