

# EBENEZER UNITING CHURCH



## Welcome to our Winter Newsletter.

Welcome to the Ebenezer Uniting Church Easter Newsletter. This newsletter is for those with whom we have links through our various programs, activities, baptisms, weddings or funerals and for the local community. It is an opportunity to let you know what is happening and share some reflections to help you think about God, life, hope and Spirituality. Therefore, we offer you these reflections with our prayers for your own spiritual journey through life. Please join us any time you are able.

### **Upcoming Events**

Some of the activities for the next few months are:

**Men's Breakfast – 8.45am for 9.00am start, 16 June:** All men are invited to our next Men's Breakfast gathering. Venue: Windsor Uniting Church, Macquarie St, Windsor. Please contact David Kidd [davidkidd@bigpond.com](mailto:davidkidd@bigpond.com) or 0409 347 194 if attending. The guest speaker is the Moderator of the Uniting Church in NSW, Rev Simon Hansford.

**Ebenezer Pilgrimage and Uniting Church Anniversary 11.30 am, 17 June:** A combined Zone celebration service will be held at Ebenezer Church and features the Moderator, Rev Simon Hansford. There will be a farewell for Rev Geoff Stevenson during the lunch to follow as he takes up new work in the wider church.

**Massive Market Day — 8 am – 2 pm @ Pitt Town Uniting Church - Sat 30 June:** The major fundraiser for building clean water wells in West Papua and a fabulous community event—all are welcome!

**Macquarie Towns Vintage Motor Bikes – am on Sat 28 July** – will be gathering at Ebenezer Church for judging and morning tea. Over 100 bikes.

*Feel free to invite your friends and family to these events, which are intended to relate to our lives and give us strength, focus and hope in our lives.*

## ***Thoughts from Geoff***



I heard the story of a person building a new home. It was on land that was close to the water – just 50 metres from the water's edge. He had grand plans of a large house that looked over the one-story homes in front of him so he had a water view. The plans were submitted, and warnings came back about the high-water table and the need for good foundations. He wasn't worried – until they began to dig the holes for the piers. They dug and almost immediately hit water! They couldn't get down far enough to solid ground – 'Houston, we have a problem!' They had to bring in solid steel piers and bore them down deeply into something solid. It took significantly longer – significantly longer! Problems mounted up and so did the dollars. Despite the counsel of those who had wisdom and knowledge, he wouldn't compromise his large 2-story plans that concentrated rather than spread the weight of the home on this shaky ground beneath. Eventually the house was built, and it seems okay but at a huge cost and considerable effort!

The next thing he decided was to install a swimming pool. Not just a simple pool but a complex, deep one and, you guessed it, the water table was there to present more difficulties! They had to dig and line the hole, fill it with concrete in some way – it was, again, quite complex and very expensive!

I thought of the wonderful little story that Jesus told about two men who built homes – one on shifting sands and the other on rock. The wind and water came and washed the first house down but the second survived because of the solid ground and foundations on which it was built. Jesus went on to infer that life is like that and we should beware of the foundations on which we build our lives. Are they solid or shifting? All the grand plans, hopes and dreams count for nothing if they stand on shifting sands or unstable ground.

This big, grand house the man built required a great deal of work, money and expertise to build it on firm ground and provide foundations to keep this house standing and strong. Sometimes our foundations have to go down deeply and seek solid rock on which to build. At other times the solid rock is closer to the surface, more readily obvious and available. So, with life! Sometimes our lives venture through terrain that requires us to go deeply down onto solid ground to remain firm against the winds and storms that life throws our way. At other times, life is okay and the foundations don't need to be quite so deep.

But what are these foundations? What is it that keep some people upright through the most difficult situations of life whilst others seem to collapse? The obvious one for me to name is faith because in my experience the presence of God, realised and embraced, is a powerful foundation that can sustain me through the harshest moments of life. It is very clear that God is a very real source of hope, strength and life amidst the pain and struggle that comes my way. When my life is bedded in the

foundation of God, through prayer and meditation, reflection on Bible stories and the life of Jesus, I feel as if there is a solid ground beneath my feet as I journey through life. When I am distracted or begin to feel overly confident in myself and my own wisdom there is sometimes a sinking feeling when the wind blows up and I am not as solidly grounded in the life of God.

The second source of solid foundation for life is connectedness with other people at a deep level. God gives us one another to share life, support one another and to journey together through life. We help one another and lean on each other when times are hard. Sometimes we carry each other when life becomes so harsh. So many people are not connected to others at any deep level. There is much superficiality in many relationships; they are built on false and transient foundations that easily fail when the going gets tough or situations change. Deep relationships of trust and love are vital for us to sustain our lives through tough times – we also share the hard times of others as their support.

There are other elements of building strong foundations for life but one more is to find a meaningful purpose and contribution to life; to be actively involved in something that makes a difference, even a small difference. Some people are fortunate to find this through work and others volunteer in organisations where they can follow their passions and make a difference in the world. It is really significant to do something for another person, something that requires some measure of sacrifice of yourself. The act of giving to another is beautiful and touches both them and us. We often feel helpless before the news of the day and the overwhelming issues that confront our world. ‘Who am I, that I could change anything?’ we ask. Alone we are relatively helpless but together with others we can make a difference and change even a small part of the world.

This investment in meaningful, purposeful activity, relationships and spirituality builds the foundation of our lives and strengthens this foundation for the times when life isn’t easy. We develop resources, connections, capacity and ultimately learn to trust God and build a strong foundation on which to grow and live and endure the good and hard times. Jesus reminds us to build our lives on solid foundations.

May God’s love and grace be with you!!  
Geoff.

***For any support, questions, comments, please visit or contact us at***

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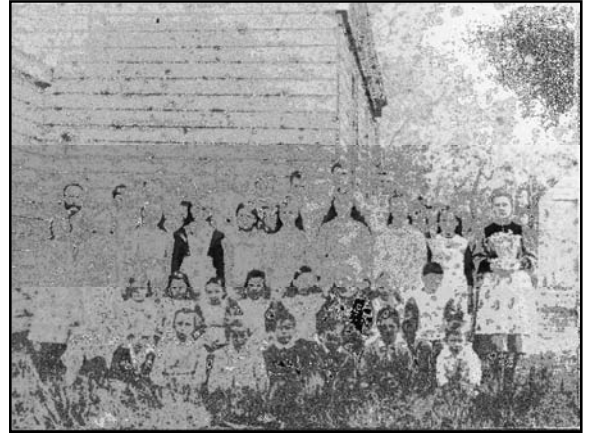
*Email:* [tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au](mailto:tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au)

## Bush Fires in Ebenezer

For the last two hundred years Ebenezer has been a community that has faced up to its problems. Once Ebenezer's pioneers had cleared their land and built their homes, they then built a church and started a school for their children. This was without government assistance.

And they had to face the threat of bushfires. There were occasions when their wheat crops, haystacks, homes and barns were completely destroyed by fire.

In 1874 Abraham Johnston and his wife Henrietta were driving in their buggy along Sackville Road. The bush was on fire on both sides of the road. When sparks fell on Mrs Johnston's dress, it ignited and she became almost immediately enveloped in flames. Her injuries from burns were so severe that she soon afterwards died.



**Ebenezer Public School that was burnt down by a bush fire on 17th December 1901**



**Tizzana Winery alight in 1955  
Photo: Tizzana Winery Archives**

Ebenezer buildings have not been spared by fires. In 1901 Ebenezer Public School, then situated in Coromandel Road, was burnt to the ground, as was the 1st Ebenezer Girl Guides Gunya in Tizzana Road in the 1950's. In 1955 a fire also severely damaged Tizzana Winery.

The December 1951 bush fire was one of the worst fires in the district's history. Starting at Roberts Creek and fanned by strong gusts of wind, flames raced from treetop to treetop. The fire soon spread over Stannix Park Road and across Ebenezer. There were accounts of eucalypts along Sackville Road and pine trees at Kemp's property in Tizzana Road suddenly bursting into flame and sending huge fire-balls soaring into the air. The fire jumped the river three times in three hours. Local residents were assisted in their efforts to protect their property by personnel from the Richmond Base, students from the Richmond Agricultural College and 'New Australians' from the Scheyville Centre.

Within two weeks of this fire occurring a public meeting, chaired by local state parliamentarian Bernie Dean, was held at Ebenezer Public School with the purpose of

forming an Ebenezer fire brigade. Colo Shire Council endorsed the formation of the brigade and certified Harold Hall as captain on 4th January 1952.

For the last sixty-six years the **Ebenezer Rural Fire Brigade** has maintained its role as an active organisation that is dedicated to providing a community-based fire and emergency service, an outstanding achievement for the community of Ebenezer.

In April this year the Ebenezer Brigade was part of a strike team at the fire in Sydney's south-west at Holsworthy. Firefighters battled an out-of-control blaze which burnt through a major military base and threatened homes in several suburbs. More recently the brigade joined 21 other brigades in a hazard reduction of 2,000 hectares at Colo Heights.

Last year three new brigade members were fully trained and another two are in training this year.

Should you wish to join or support the Ebenezer Brigade please ring secretary Neville Wearne on 0417 448 558 for further information.



You are invited to the

## 209<sup>th</sup> Pilgrimage to Ebenezer Church.

There will be a special service at

11:30am on Sunday 17 June

Refreshments will be served after the service.

Rev Simon Hansford, Moderator of the NSW Synod,

will be the special guest preacher.

Inquiries: 45 799 235; 0438 777 215

Ebenezer Uniting Church, Coromandel Road, Ebenezer



Tea,  
coffee &  
cake stall

Sausage,  
egg &  
bacon  
rolls

Books and  
plants

HUGE  
local  
fruit &  
veg stall

# PITT TOWN'S MASSIVE

MARKET DAY/ GARAGE SALE

**SATURDAY JUNE 30**

AT THE UNITING CHURCH, BATHURST ST



**9AM - 2PM**

## FREE STALLS

Book a spot and sell your garage items,  
books, clothes, old wares etc.

*"Your stall, your money"*

Take home what profit you make!



Find us on  
Facebook



**Our mission is to raise money for clean  
water wells in West Papua!**



All enquiries call 0439309303 or for stall bookings call 4572 3518!

*A one-liner ... (that actually takes two lines!)*

*The first computer dates back to Adam and Eve. It was an Apple with limited memory, just one byte. And then everything crashed.*

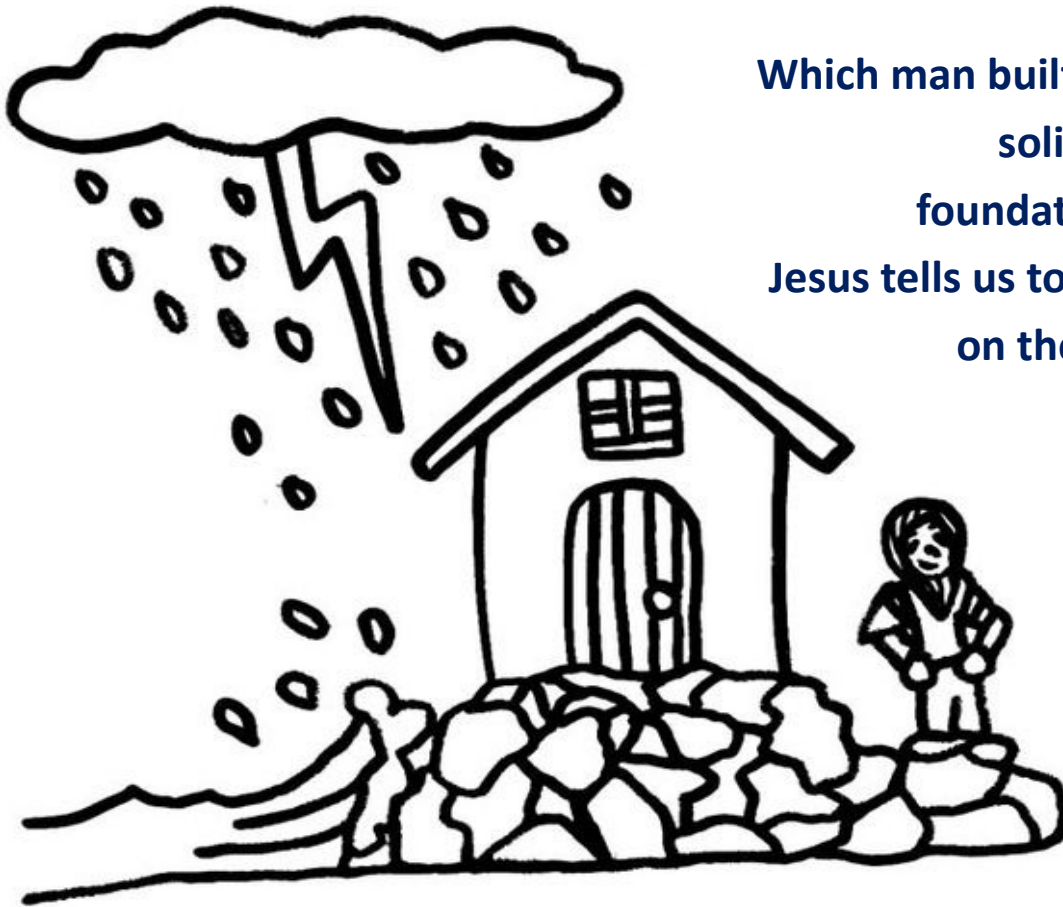
## ***Things to Ponder...***

### ***21 Mysteries of the Universe***

1. Why do soldiers patrolling in cities wear jungle camouflage?
2. Why is it, when the doorbell rings, the dog always thinks it's for him?
3. How does Teflon stick to the pan?
4. How come 'slow down' means the same as 'slow up'?
5. If I said I always tell lies, would I be telling the truth?
6. Why are people in the Second World never mentioned?
7. If moths are attracted to light why don't they come out in the day?
8. How do we know God likes hymns?
9. What is the speed of dark?
10. Why do slugs never eat weeds?
11. Why don't people who believe in reincarnation ever leave their money to themselves?
12. What do occasional tables do the rest of the time?
13. How come airline meal trays are fuller after you've finished eating?
14. Why are vices more habit-forming than virtues?
15. Where do people in hell tell each other to go?
16. Why do they bother to sterilize the needle when giving a lethal injection?
17. Why is a wrong number never engaged?
18. Why do kamikaze pilots wear crash helmets?
19. Why are there so many different kinds of animals – couldn't we get by with, say, 300,000 kinds of beetle instead of 500,000?
20. Why is it that the most beautiful animals on earth are hidden away from all humans except those wearing elaborate SCUBA equipment? Who are they beautiful for?
21. Why are there dirty jokes? What makes the physiology of excretion and reproduction so funny anyhow?

*Questions help me contemplate life, the world and God.  
Why not take some time to contemplate today?*

## Children's Activities...



Which man built his house on  
solid  
foundations?

Jesus tells us to build our lives  
on the on the strong  
Foundations  
of God's  
love!

