It is very easy to let world events discourage us. Sadly, perhaps the most discouraging “world event” is the direction our own nation is taking as it rejects God’s revealed Truth in Christ and the Scriptures as its moral compass.

The impact this is having on our children’s generation is frightening; and trying to solve it without the right moral compass (as the humanistic shakers and movers with loud voices are trying to do) is even more frightening. The message of Easter is a good remedy for this spirit of discouragement.

It is hard to imagine how devastated Jesus’ disciples must have felt on the day before that eventful Friday. Gradually, as they heard him speak and saw him perform inexplicable miracles, they came to accept the only possible explanation: that he was their Promised Messiah.

“Every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” - Philippians 2:10-11.

By Rev Bruce Christian, Chaplain

To Page 2
No, he didn’t really fit their expectations; but how else could his wisdom and power be interpreted? Perhaps the spontaneous response of the crowd on the Sunday before Passover was their final confirmation as to his true identity!

Then, suddenly, everything fell apart: his strange words at the Last Supper about his “broken body” and his “shed blood”; his prediction about “betrayal”; his unbelievable anguish and wrestling in prayer in their familiar “quiet” place in Gethsemane; his brutal, illegal arrest and trial throughout the night; the outright lies that his opponents told as they deliberately misrepresented everything he stood for; it was all too much, too depressing, too hard to understand.

Where was their sovereign, loving God in all this?

We need to remember two important things as we reflect on all this in our own world situation as we see the suffering and unsolvable plight of refugees, especially those who are our brothers and sisters (and nephews and nieces!) in Christ, and as we see the moral bankruptcy of our own nation.

The first is that Jesus warned us that following him would be costly. He said that whatever happened to him as a result of the wickedness of men would also happen to us.

He said: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” (John 15:18).

These are strong words, and the fact that it isn’t what most of us have experienced in our fairly sheltered lives so far doesn’t mean that we won’t have to face it in the future.

The important thing to remember is that none of this takes God by surprise. He is sovereign, and he is working everything for his glory and our good.

The second is that, in spite of all that happened on that Friday, the victory belonged to Jesus! By Sunday he had conquered death by his glorious resurrection - and the empty tomb is such convincing proof that everyone will eventually be judged by it (Acts 17:31).

The victory was assured in God’s eternal plan, but the path to it involved struggle, confusion, perplexity, disappointment and discouragement.

The next (and last) pivotal event in the Plan will be Jesus’ Second Coming.

“At that time “every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” - Philippians 2:10-11.

Until then, and especially leading up to then, we will face trouble. Jesus said: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” - John 16:33.

May this Easter be a time of real encouragement to each of us as we celebrate the gift of salvation!

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Parents and Friends

The meeting will be held this Monday (21 March) from 8.45am in the IRC.

This is timed to facilitate the drop-off of children for the start of school. It should not take longer than an hour and will focus on events planned for this year. The P&F is planning an evening meeting for next term at which we we plan to get a speaker.

The P&F Coins of Care fundraiser has raised $906. There were 2,456 5c coins ... and a collection of foreign coins and buttons!

Parent Teacher evenings now in Term 1

Whole school Parent Teacher Evenings will be held on Tuesday 5 April and Thursday 7 April, from 3pm to 8.30pm.

This event is being held earlier in the year than previously so that parents can not only receive feedback on their child’s learning, but also work proactively with teachers to help each student achieve to the best of his or her ability.

Letters containing booking codes and the outline of the process of booking interviews were posted this week and should be received in the near future.

New teacher appointed

Miss Emily Francis has recently been appointed to replace Mrs Rachel Dunne, who is moving to London at the end of this term. Emily comes to us from Woolooware Public School and attends Engadine Anglican. She will start at the beginning of next term.
Our school has a proud history of providing a quality Christian education. Our students have the opportunity to study the Bible, understand a Christian perspective on a range of topics being studied in class and be taught by teachers who have committed their lives to Christ.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:6,7, Paul commends the Thessalonians for imitating the Lord and being a model to all the believers.

When I recently led the Wednesday 8 am staff devotion, I read 1 Thessalonians 1 and encouraged all Shire Christian School staff to remember that the Lord has called them to imitate Christ.

I also reminded our teachers that our students do keenly observe how our teachers behave and that just as the Thessalonians were a model to other believers, so our teachers are a model to our students.

Quite a few years ago some adults said to me that they wouldn’t want to send their children to a Christian school. When I tried to explore their thinking, some people commented that they don’t agree with Christian values.

I could never quite work out what specific values they disagreed with, however, I would have thought that almost every parent would be thrilled to think that a school employed teachers who both taught and modelled the fruit of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Critical thinking

Last year when I promoted the importance of developing critical thinking skills in our students I received correspondence, from someone not connected with the school, who somewhat sarcastically claimed that critical thinking was incompatible with Christian schooling.

Unfortunately, I didn’t get the opportunity to explain to this person that Protestant churches started as a result of reasoned argument at the time of the Reformation and that evangelical Christianity has embraced criticism of its core beliefs and logically responded to them ever since. Therefore, developing critical thinking skills is an essential feature of a Christian education rather than being incompatible with it.

Sadly, some people in 21st Century Australian society have gone beyond rejecting the Christian faith or presenting reasoned arguments criticising what Christians believe. There seems to be a growing view that Australia is a secular society and Christianity is no longer celebrated or tolerated, but is seen as a threat.

Religious freedom

Religious freedom is then seen as akin to allowing prejudice and hate and a push begins to restrict a Christian’s freedom to speak.

One example of this was when a Greens political candidate recently complained to the Anti-Discrimination Board about the Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Julian Porteous, distributing a very benign and inoffensive booklet setting out the Catholic Church’s teaching on marriage to Catholic parishioners and school students.

While I understand that this complaint was not sustained, the fact that the complaint was made presents a challenge for schools like ours who want to articulate a Biblical position to our students which may not be palatable to some in society.

Thankfully our school continues to be legally allowed to employ Christian staff and unashamedly teach the Bible and explore a Christian perspective on a range of topics.

Please pray that the parliament and the courts will continue to accept that the right to religious freedom continues to extend to our school.

Mr Brett Hartley

From the Principal

Continue to pray for religious freedom
Thanks to all our parents’ great efforts in collecting Woolworths ‘Earn and Learn’ vouchers, our school received some lovely equipment!

**Year 9**

**Rites of passage**

‘Patricia was a challenging and influential speaker. It was great to get some Godly advice on things that concern Year 9’

**Teen Sexuality**

On Monday 14 March, as part of our Rites of Passage programme, Year 9 students had the privilege of hearing Patricia and her son Kamal Werakoon speak on sex, sexuality and the Christian perspective.

Once students realised that these speakers were amusing, personable and truly interested in their well being, the year relaxed into what could only be considered an amazing morning.

Following up from the talks, Year 9 divided into their pastoral care classes for a debrief session in the hall.

We praise God for such an amazing opportunity, for the clarity of truth spoken into the lives of our young people and the mature response from our Year 9s.

*Mrs Jackie Haralambou, Year 9 Patron*

‘It was a safe atmosphere’

‘I would like to have some more talks on how to act like a Christian and follow the way Jesus wants us to live, while everyone else follows the world’s trends’
For Prayer and praise

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- Romans 5:8 (ESV)

• Praise God for his sacrificial love, in sending his son to die for us.
• Pray for students with additional needs in our school and praise God for the Learning Support Staff who encourage, facilitate and teach those students.
• Praise God for the many gifts and talents He has given to the students at our school, specifically the sporting abilities showcased in swimming carnivals this term.
• Pray for the teaching staff as they continue to teach and set an example of Godliness for the students, parents and each other.
• Pray for wisdom for the school board members as they make decisions for the school.
• Pray that the news of the death and resurrection of Jesus will spread throughout our community this coming Easter, and that many people will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Welcome to our new music tutor

This year we welcome Julia Booth to our team of about a dozen tutors. Julia comes to Shire Christian School with a wealth of experience teaching Piano and Clarinet, including studying music education for four years at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music at Sydney University.

She achieved an A grade in her AMUS on Piano, and has completed 5th Grade on Clarinet. She has worked at St Catherine’s Waverley, The Scotts College, New England Girls’ School (Armidale) and The Armidale School among others.

She has written and recorded compositions on a self released EP Count it Joy, with the title track based on James 1. She has composed a piano ballad based on the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15) called ‘Father Forgive Me’ available on iTunes and youtube.

She has also been a supported artist for Eskimo Joe at ‘Flix in the Stix’ in Armidale 2014.

When asked what brings her joy, she replied: “The beach, good coffee, the Psalms, teaching composition and helping students to strive towards achieving their goals in music learning”.

Junior School

Silver Award
Luke Rolland

Bronze Awards
Luke Rolland
James Pizel

Important notice

The Premier’s Reading Challenge has begun

The Premier’s Reading Challenge (PRC) has begun for this year. As in past years, Library staff are recording the PRC identification number of the books read on behalf of your child.

All books read to the students by teachers are automatically added.

Any titles suitable for inclusion read at home may be taken into account, please pop in to the IRC to see Mrs Humphreys or Mrs Hancock to have these entered.

K-2: 25 titles from the PRC list and five personal choice. A total of 30 books.
3-6: 15 titles from the PRC list and five personal choice. A total of 20 books

Happy Reading. - The Library Team
Year 9 Textile students have been building their repertoire of practicals over the last 4 weeks.

Their first project was to create a kit bag to store their practical equipment in.

Some of the skills they had to apply included: Attaching a zipper, creating a pocket, sewing seams and a casing for the draw string and applying a decoration to the bag.

Mrs Helen Bull, Teaching Staff

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**Mother & Daughter Book Club**

Our Library staff will be hosting a Mother/Daughter Book Club event on Monday 2 May at 7.30pm in the Secondary Library.

We will chat about the book for about half an hour, then share in a decadent High Tea Supper together.

We will be discussing the book *Counting by 7’s* by Holly Goldberg Sloan. You’ll love her character Willow.

Copies are available to borrow from the Library, and this book is available from local bookstores and online stores ... especially if you can’t wait for a library copy.

It is not essential to have read the book beforehand, you may like to read it afterwards.

Mrs Kirren Wilson, Teaching Staff
Eleven students from Years 4-6 swam at the CSSA State Swimming Carnival at Blacktown. All the students swam well, with personal best times being achieved and some great results against high-quality competition. Sebastian Sara has qualified to swim at the CIS Swimming Championships next week in the 50m Freestyle, Backstroke and Butterfly. A fantastic achievement!

The students who represented our school were: Samantha Zhang, Summerset Rigg, Caitlin Gilbett, Ella Leong, Lara Humphreys, Ella Luxton, Kieran George, Danie Bredell, Jaydan Kepu, Sebastian Sara and Joshua Shortt.

Well done to all our swimmers.

Mr Tim Bluhdorn, Teaching Staff

A new perspective on Caring

Year 12 CAFS students are currently studying the topic Parenting and Caring.

We had the privilege of interviewing two ex-students, Mrs Tamara Salaun and Mrs Grace Bartlett who have recently become first time mothers.

While Tamara and Grace spoke about preparations necessary for parenthood, the students especially enjoyed their time with their beautiful babies Ben, Jake and William.

Mrs Kathy Corban, Teaching Staff
The HSC Music class of 2015 had incredible results, and four of those students even got nominated for Encore.

So, it was with eager anticipation that we headed into the Opera House for this year’s Encore performances, showcasing the best of the 2015 HSC Music Performance and Compositions, knowing that our school was also performing at the high standard required for this event.

And, the concert did not disappoint. Our students came away inspired that young people could achieve at such a high standard, and to continually strive to work hard in all that we do.

The standard across the whole evening simply promoted excellence - excellence in performance quality and composition. Excellence in the value of hard work and dedication through ongoing practice.

The evening was glamorous and exciting, celebrated diverse and beautiful music, and allowed us as the audience to appreciate outstanding achievement.

But that is such a small part of the performer’s story, and one would be foolish to think that has been their whole musical experience.

As performers, musicians and students, we need to be reminded of the following: it is the everyday choosing to work on your instrument, play the scales, attend rehearsals that makes the difference.

I am sure for the performers at Encore, their musical journey has not always been glamorous – it has been hard work and disciplined. But I am also sure it has always been and will continue to be rewarding.

Thank you to the Year 11 and 12 students for such a lovely evening.

Mrs Jennifer Geering, Teaching Staff
“A fantastic, affordable school full of compassionate, dedicated Christian teachers and like-minded parents.”
- Melis Knight (Shire Christian parent)

now enrolling kinder and year 7

Contact our Registrar: 8525 5111
enrolments@shirechristian.nsw.edu.au
shirechristian.nsw.edu.au

Shire Christian School

fresh new look
Same values and mission
Prep 2 Colour Day
Work experience forms due
Year 10 students have less than two weeks to bring in their forms for Work Experience. The deadline is Tuesday 5 April.

Looking for a career change?
Airservices is Australia’s air navigation service provider: providing air traffic control, aviation rescue and fire fighting and air navigation services.

Applications for Trainee Air Traffic Controllers are now open, closing on 31 March 2016.

If selected as a trainee, and when your employment commences, you will receive world class training at their Learning Academy, leading to the AV150115 Diploma of Aviation (Air Traffic Control).

To perform this critical role in the aviation industry, you will need to:
- Demonstrate good spatial awareness and strong mathematical skills
- Demonstrate excellent communication skills
- Have the ability to work well under pressure and make quick, accurate decisions
- Enjoy taking charge and being accountable for your actions and decisions
- Be willing work shifts 24/7, 365 days of the year
- Meet medical and security clearance requirements.

You must be at least 18 years of age and be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or an Australian Permanent Resident.

You must be able to provide evidence that you have obtained ONE of the following at an Australian institution in the past 10 years:
- Year 12 Certificate with a score enabling entrance to university
- Completed Tertiary Diploma
- Completed Degree
- Current Commercial Pilot Licence or Private Pilot Licence.

Training is undertaken in Melbourne.
Salary as a trainee controller at the Learning Academy is $47,504.
During final field training you will earn $71,257 and upon initial air traffic control rating you will earn $96,988.

Please see their website for more details or email avrecruit@airservicesaustralia.com

UNSW subject selection
Register now for Year 10 Subject Selection and Information Evenings at UNSW: 5, 10 and 18 May. Register via whatson.unsw.edu.au

These evenings are the best place to start for students who are thinking about starting university in 2019.

The evening will cover a number of relevant topics including subject selection, bonus points, what the difference is between assumed knowledge and prerequisites and how the uni admission and scholarships application process works.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Prep to Year 6</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 21 March</td>
<td>CSSA Secondary State Swimming Carnival</td>
<td>Year 11 U-Turn the Wheel</td>
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<td>Tue 22 March</td>
<td>Junior School CIS Swimming Carnival</td>
<td>Year 10 VA &amp; PDM Hazlehurst Excursion</td>
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<td>Thu 24 March</td>
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<td>Easter Assembly 11am to 12.15pm</td>
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<td>AFL Afternoon Clinic: 2.35pm to 3.45pm</td>
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<td>Fri 25 March</td>
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<td>Good Friday</td>
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<td>Mon 28 March</td>
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<td>Easter Monday</td>
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<td>Tue 29 March</td>
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<td>Secondary School Tour 9.15am - 10.15am</td>
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<td>Wed 30 March</td>
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<td>Year 12 Exams Starting - Ends 8 April</td>
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<td>Thu 31 March</td>
<td>Junior School CSSA Netball Trials</td>
<td>U15 Zone Girls Touch Football Gala Days</td>
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<td>AFL Afternoon Clinic 2.35 - 3.45pm</td>
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<td>Year 9 Visual Arts Excursion - Brett Whiteley</td>
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<td>Yr 11 Geography SGP Trip to the Needles</td>
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<td>School Board Meeting</td>
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<td>Fri 1 April</td>
<td>Year 4 Kurnell Discovery Tour</td>
<td>U15 Zone Girls Touch Football Gala Days</td>
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**Community Corner**

**Vacation care program**

School holiday program includes incursions and excursions for 5-12 year olds. Child rebate is available.

For more information: 9541 4367

**3Bridges Community Programs**

3Bridges is a community organisation that provides several services to the suburbs surrounding Menai, this include programs addressing the isolation of the elderly, holiday craft days for younger children and workshops for parents of teenagers.

For more information: www.3bridges.org.au or email admin.menai@3bridges.org.au

Items in Community Corner of the newsletter are placed at the discretion of the School. However, the School does not endorse any such item.