



*Thank you Janine .Arrua for this week's photo.*

## Ettalong Baptist Church Newsletter, 21st December 2023

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2023 .There will not be any posted newsletters through January and we will just have one (or maybe two) email newsletters.

The EBC Office will be closed for the holidays from today and will reopen on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> of January.

Ministry of Leftovers will be closed from 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 reopening on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2024.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

### Merry Christmas From The Pastor:

**This Sunday 24 December and Christmas Day, 25 December, we continue to reflect on some of the songs of Christmas from the Bible.**

First on Sunday morning we will be reflecting on "Mary's Song – The Magnificat," from Luke 1:46-56.

Second on Christmas Day we will be reflecting on "Zechariah's Song – The Benedictus," from Luke 1:57-80

In her "Magnificat," Mary sings with great joy after having met with her cousin Elizabeth. Both women are pregnant, and both pregnancies are miraculous in nature. The song is full of praise for how God has paid attention to Mary despite her insignificance. It is also prophetic of what God will do through this Christ, exalting the lowly, and bringing down the proud. Mary knew she would face great trials serving God as the mother of Jesus. But she knew there is nothing more wonderful than to be in the will of God, serving him.

Zechariah is a Jewish Priest, and the husband of Elizabeth. When Elizabeth gives birth to their son, John the Baptist, Zechariah sings out his prophetic song of praise, what we call "The Benedictus."

Zechariah had lost faith in God, as had much of Israel had in those days. But God had not forgotten the old priest and his wife Elizabeth, and God has not forgotten any of His people. God is now fulfilling the promises that he has made to his people through the Old Testament. There had been the promise of a king on David's throne who would save God's people, and the covenant that he made with Abraham.

Zechariah prophesies in his song that his own son will play the role of the forerunner of the one who will fulfil these promises. John will point people to Jesus Christ for it is in him that salvation is found.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy new year,  
Blessings, Pastor David.

## Christmas and End Of Year Services:

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 9.30am service** will be livestreamed on YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/live/dEYGMhZSks?si=u8F\\_W96u3ROOotQj](https://www.youtube.com/live/dEYGMhZSks?si=u8F_W96u3ROOotQj)

On Sunday after the 9.30am service we have an opportunity for prayer or praise at the front of the church. Come to the stage after the service. Jessie and Graham and others would love to pray with you.

Alternatively please ask for prayer by leaving a request on our website, or use the cards on the Welcome Table

<https://ettalongbaptistchurch.org.au/contact/>

**Christmas Day 25<sup>th</sup> December 9.30am service** will be livestreamed on YouTube <https://youtube.com/live/2xckcD-fHoc?feature=share> :

### **New Years Eve 9:30am Service.**

How To Get Your Vision Back - Blind Bartimaeus, Luke 18:35-43.

As we start a new year, it's time to open our eyes, and sharpen our focus on Jesus Christ, trusting in him, so that as a church we can "Move forward together in Christ's steps."

The New Years Eve Service 9:30am will be live streamed on YouTube

<https://youtube.com/live/4PfEKSY3eaY?feature=share>

## Christmas Day Offering:

This year we are again taking up a special offering on Christmas Day for Baptist World Aid Australia. You can give to our Christmas Day Offering in two ways:

- 1). By placing your cash or cheque in our Offering Box on Christmas Day. Any money placed in the box on Christmas Day will be given to the Baptist World Aid Christmas Day Offering.
- 2). You can give by Credit Card going to <https://baptistworldaid.org.au/give/> if you give this way you will receive a tax deductible receipt for all gifts over \$2.

## New Years Eve Fun and Fundraiser – Everyone Is Welcome:

New Years Eve, 7pm we are holding a buffet dinner and a video movie night in the downstairs hall. Dinner and Movie \$20 each. All money received will go to help Nat make it to 2024 Walking in the footsteps of Paul tour.

**Please let Heather Crawford know for catering purposes that you will be joining us.**

## Crossroads Counselling

Crossroads Counselling will be closed until 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

In case of emergencies during this time, please contact David Gilchrist.

## 4pm Service: SHOUT!! Is In Recess:

This service is in recess until Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

## 2024 Church Calendar:

The 2024 church calendar is being compiled. If you have any inclusions, deletions or changes for your group or meeting please let Beth Wykes know asap. Please include start and end time, room used and if you follow the school term. Thank you for your help.

## EBC Church Directory Updating:

The Church Directory is being updated. Could you please email any changes of address or contact details to [jeanelynch@gmail.com](mailto:jeanelynch@gmail.com) by January 15<sup>th</sup>.

Any new people in our church who would like to be included in the updated directory, please send through your details to me on [jeanelynch@gmail.com](mailto:jeanelynch@gmail.com) by Jan 15th, with specific consent for your details to be included in the directory. Thank you, Jean.

## "Walking in the Footsteps of Paul" – Gathering:

Elaine Halliday has kindly offered for those going on the Footsteps Of Paul Tour, to join her in the community room of her villa complex for afternoon tea at 2.30pm on **Wednesday 8th January 2024**. This will be an opportunity for us to get to know each other, for David and Heather to talk about final arrangements etc. Please rsvp to Heather (ph 0419297496) who will give you the address. Thank you.

## January Craft Preparation Day:

This January we are again holding a craft preparation day for the Spring Fair. Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2024, 9am to 2pm in the Downstairs Hall. See Heather for details or to register interest. All materials etc. are supplied and morning Tea and lunch are provided. All welcome.

**Please let Heather Crawford know that you are interested in helping.**

## Spring Fair Co-ordinators Meeting Lunch:

Spring Fair Co-ordinators Meeting and Luncheon will be held on Sunday 4th February after morning tea. We will need to bring the Spring Fair forward to the 1st Saturday in September 2024 due to Council elections being held on the 2nd Saturday. Please rsvp asap to Heather. (0419 297 496)

## Connect Group Leaders Meeting Lunch:

There is to be a meeting of all Connect group leaders, and or anyone who would like to lead or co-lead a group in 2024, to be held on Sunday 11th February after morning tea. Partners welcome to come too. Lunch will be supplied. An agenda will be sent out shortly. Please rsvp to Heather.(0419 297 496)

## Old Greeting Cards Needed:

Maria Janos is recycling old greeting cards into new cards. Please donate your used greeting cards. You can leave them in the container on the cupboard in the church foyer.

## Prayer Partners/Triplets for 2024.

Several years ago, we introduced the concept of prayer partners or triplets. These proved to be a real blessing for our church. Several groups are still functioning. Heather is keen to reintroduce these, so if anyone would like to either re-establish their group or form a new prayer partner/triplet for 2024 please let her know. There are brochures in the church foyer on the concept and how to start such a group.

## Umina Uniting Church Christmas Lunch:

Ettalong Baptist has received from the leadership team at Umina Uniting Church, an invite to anyone who is on their own for Christmas lunch, to join them for Christmas lunch, 11am - 2.30pm in their church hall. Please RSVP to Linda on 0480 367 853 before 23rd December. Please RSVP early to avoid disappointment. There is a flyer in the downstairs hall for your information.

## Sunday Morning Prayer Group 8.45am to 9.15am:

A small group of people meet to pray each Sunday morning before the 9.30am service at the back of the Downstairs Hall. They would love you to join them and to pray particularly for our worship services.

## Zoom Prayer Groups Are Currently In Recess:

These groups are currently in recess.

Tuesday morning group will resume 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 at 10am

Tuesday evening group will resume 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7pm.

See Greg or Elizabeth Beckenham to join.

## Giving:

As Christians, we believe it is especially important that we give financially to support God's church. Prayerfully consider and budget what God would have you give.

**You may give your weekly offering using the following methods:**

**1). Through direct electronic transfer.** You can do this using online banking or ask your bank teller to set up an electronic transfer for you using the bank details below.

**2). Deposit your offering directly into the church account** at any branch of the Westpac Bank.

**Our account details are:**

Account Name: Ettalong Baptist Church

BSB Number: 032 527, Account Number: 350 062

**3). Use the box at the main entrance door to the auditorium for cash or cheques.**

## Ettalong Baptist Church Safe Church Team:

To report a child protection concern or incident please contact:

**Pastor—David Gilchrist, or Elder—Jane Keuning**

## Note From The Office:

If you would like anything added to future Newsletters, please send any notices to me at this email address (Lynette), [office@ettalongbaptistchurch.org.au](mailto:office@ettalongbaptistchurch.org.au)

If you want to be added or removed from the email list please email Lynette at [office@ettalongbaptistchurch.org.au](mailto:office@ettalongbaptistchurch.org.au)

I would like to thank you for all your support and encouragement in my new position.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Blessed Christmas

Lynette

## Find important Church Documents on our Website Documents page:

If you haven't already go to our documents page on our website at: [Ettalongbaptistchurch.org.au / documents](http://Ettalongbaptistchurch.org.au/documents)  
You can download and print documents, or simply read and fill in documents online!

## Unsubscribe / Subscribe:

If you wish to no longer receive this newsletter by snail mail, please let the church office know.

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter by email, please reply to this email with the word UNSUBSCRIBE and we will remove you from this email list.



**Tobias, Heather, Elijah, Rachel, and Lydia**  
**tobandhez@me.com**

**Issue 4/2023 December**

Greetings,

Well, time really got away from us this time! We left Mozambique in early July to attend to a few medical appointments and then had holidays before arriving to Australia on August 11. Since then, it's been a crazy up and down time with lots of good things, some not-so-good things, and some things that are just part of life. So, welcome to this edition of the Houston Herald, written from the bushy surrounds of the NSW Central Coast!

### **Family Update (and general update about our time in Australia so far)**

We basically got stuck straight into visiting churches once we arrived in Australia. We've enjoyed seeing some familiar faces and meeting new people as we have gone from church-to-church sharing our story and what is happening with the Mozambican Yawo Oral Bible Translation project. It's been encouraging for Tob to talk about the project and to be part of something so new in Mozambique. The Yawo in Mozambique have never had Scripture in their own dialect of Ciyawo, so it's really quite a privilege to be leading a team of Yawo mother-tongue speakers as they translate the Bible into their language.

Since arriving in Australia in August, we have sadly been struck by what seems like an unending cycle of sickness and infections. At the time of writing, Tob has had seven cycles of the flu/cold (perhaps even COVID?), including the cold he flew from holidays with and the cold he picked up in the USA as well. Hez and the kids have also suffered with illness. Sickness really takes its toll in terms of energy and being able to continue with everyday activities – not to mention also visiting churches, attending to medical appointments, visiting family and friends, and so on.

Despite the sickness and other challenges that come with figuring out how to do life in Australia again (because surprisingly enough, life in Mozambique is quite different!), we've had some great blessings. Starting with an amazing holiday on our way to Australia, we have also been encouraged by the opportunity we had to visit family in New Zealand. Although we only went for a few days in between Sunday church visits, we had a lovely time catching up with family that we haven't seen in over fifteen years (and others we hadn't met at all)! Tob's parents also came with us on the trip, so it was really lovely spending time together travelling.

Not long after the trip to New Zealand, Tob and Rachel travelled to the United States so Tob could speak at the bi-annual Bible Translation Conference in Dallas, Texas. Tob presented a paper called "Towards a model for 'Loyal Bible Translation': maintaining quality despite competing concerns". There were around 500 in-person participants at the conference and another 400 attending online. It was a fantastic time meeting other like-minded people to encourage and learn from one another. The consultant that Tob works with for our Bible translation project was there too. After the conference, Tob and Rachel were able to visit New York City for a few days together (a long-time dream of Rachel's) before returning again to Australia to continue church visits (arriving back on Friday and then visiting two churches on Sunday with jet lag!).

One of the regular activities we are grateful to make possible in Australia is swimming lessons for our kids. Elijah, Rachel, and Lydia have had weekly classes together to learn how to swim properly. They have never really learnt before so we wanted to make sure they had the opportunity this time. From flailing about chaotically in the first lesson, it is great to see how far they've come in their lessons so that they actually swim now!

## Bible Translation Project Update

**A reminder of where progress was at from the last newsletter:** *We have had a better run over the last quarter with sickness. The translation staff have been in generally good health and we have been able to make good progress. The broadcasting of Genesis continued for some of March and April before the contract with our radio partners finished for the time being. The Genesis text is with the printers and in the final stages of typesetting. Unfortunately there were some hiccups that resulted in delaying the printing. It will now be printed sometime while we are in Australia. However, the printer has agreed to send Tob some copies to Australia so we hope to be able to show you all in person when we visit churches.*

### Current progress:

Despite the last update about the typesetting being almost done, the person responsible for the typesetting continued to struggle getting things finalised. So while Tob has been in Australia, he has continued to liaise with the printer about the design. Just last month, Tob was finally able to sign off on the final file so that the book of Genesis can be printed. So hopefully within the coming weeks, the book will be printed and we'll be able to report that we have physical copies in our hands! Fortunately, the delay hasn't resulted in increased costs at this stage. The audio of Genesis is also now available from the Bible.is mobile phone app and from [faithcomesbyhearing.com](http://faithcomesbyhearing.com).

As mentioned in a previous Houston Herald, we are currently working on translating Exodus and Matthew. The teams back in Mozambique are making good progress. We are currently up to the chapters in Exodus around the celebration of the Passover, meaning that the whole narrative of the Israelites' escape from Egypt has been translated. For the book of Matthew, the team working on it has translated the first ten chapters. This is really good progress given it is their first New Testament book – meaning that it comes with a whole new set of concepts and vocabulary that the translators must grapple with.

It has been a bit tricky for Tob working on the project from Australia. He has had many late nights (after midnight!) working live with the translators as they finalise recordings and discuss how to translate certain things. The “exegetical assistant” that is now working at the project has been doing a great job and so it is not as bad as it could be in terms of Tob's need to be communicating at odd hours with the teams about what they are working on.



Tob just before speaking at the conference



Tob and Rachel visiting New York after the Bible Translation Conference

## Tricky Translation Term for Today

Today's Tricky Translation Term is "Passover". In the book of Exodus, the various stipulations for the Passover celebration are given in chapter 12. The Passover is to be an annual event when the Israelites would remember how God brought them up out of Egypt. Although it is relatively easy in Ciyawo to talk about "passing over" something, the translators had a bit more difficulty coming up with an adequate term for the name of the festival that would continue for all generations beyond the original "passing over" that God did in Egypt. In the end, they settled for a translation that literally means "the Passing-by Ceremony". It makes a lot of sense and it works. But what Tob wants to highlight this time is not so much the trickiness of the translation term itself, but the trickiness of getting to that point! That is, the discussion about how to translate the term Passover happened while Tob and Hez were doing the groceries one night! This meant Tob was recording responses in Ciyawo and Portuguese for the translators whilst walking the aisles of Woolworths, sitting outside Woolworths on a bench, and leaning over the bonnet of the car in the car park with his iPad open to the Hebrew, English, Portuguese versions of Exodus 12 alongside commentaries and dictionaries.

On the theme of tricky translation terms, Tob had a book chapter published earlier this month. The chapter discusses a tricky translation term from Hebrew, *hiddeqel*. This word is usually translated as "Tigris" in English Bibles – as in the Tigris River. To read more about this tricky translation term in the context of our Mozambican Ciyawo translation of the book of Genesis, you can read about it here: [bhacademic.bhpublishinggroup.com/product/islam-and-the-bible-3/](https://bhacademic.bhpublishinggroup.com/product/islam-and-the-bible-3/)



Elijah has learnt how to use a lathe



Enjoying some Christmas Carols

## Bible Translation Project and Houston Family Support

Sadly, partly due to inflation issues and rising costs, the Bible translation project is underfunded for 2023. We are super grateful for everyone who has donated to the project this year. May Mission Month was a great time with many people giving generously to the project. However, we do have a significant deficit to make up. In order to continue into 2024, we need an increase in funding. So please, if you or your church would like to support this project, take a look at this link: <https://bit.ly/mozoralbible> .

For us to return to Mozambique as a family next year at the end of our off-location time, we also need a bit more funding to make up a deficit that we have in our personal support. The reason for the difference is mostly because we often have one-off gifts come in each time we are in Australia and so they need to be repeated for our new term. This is especially the case when we have to account for

inflation and rising costs between terms. Pledged giving is excellent too, because then we can count on that support coming in and it can be applied to the projections for our budget. We are so grateful for our new partners who have decided to support us – thank you! For information about donating to our personal support or signing up for a pledge, see here: [baptistmissionaustralia.org/TobiasHeather](https://baptistmissionaustralia.org/TobiasHeather)

### Prayer points:

- Pray for Tob as he continues to work on the Bible translation project with the Yawo translators from a distance. There is one staff member who is a “technical assistant”. His job is to ensure that all the cogs of the project keep turning. This individual has been working alongside Tob since 2014.
- Praise God that our children have had opportunities to learn new skills and spend valuable time with family.
- Pray for Tob’s knee. He has had appointments to resolve the problems since being in Australia and things were looking good until this morning when Tob was woken in the middle of the night with significant knee pain. It seems the tear has healed but tendinitis has flared up.
- Keep the prayers coming for Hez’s back. She is currently in the hands of an Exercise Physiologist to help Hez recover. The fracture has healed but fresh problems with discs in Hez’s back have surfaced.
- Praise God that we had a restful and refreshing holiday before we arrived in Australia. Keep praying that our time in Australia is restful, fruitful, joyful, encouraging, and exciting. We have found it very challenging so far and would appreciate a fresh dose of energy!

### Link for joining the Houston Herald

Some of you may be reading this as a printed document. If that is you but would like to receive our newsletters via email, you can manually open this link on your computer or device to join the list: [bit.ly/houstonheraldsignup](https://bit.ly/houstonheraldsignup)

For access to some of the other links mentioned above, see here: [linktr.ee/tobandhez](https://linktr.ee/tobandhez)





From Andrew and Oksana Ford

Merry Christmas :)

I hope your Christmas preparations are doing better than ours. We have not a single decoration out yet though the kids have been on to us for the past couple of weeks to get a tree set up. It will happen tonight, I went and got a tree this morning and Oksana will lead the decorating of the tree with the kids this evening.

So I wanted to share a couple of things I have been involved in since our last letter. The first was the second “**Waves of Hope**”, this is our home build ministry for people who have lost their homes because of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. During 8 days of the second wave that I was involved in we built **42 homes** in a village in Chernihiv province. At the same time as the building was going on we had a pray team wandering around the village and when they saw people out they would just talk with them and offer to pray with them. So people said yes some where not interest but on the second last day of the project they walk past one of the homes I was working on and I ask them how it was going and they told me that they had already prayed with more than **60 people to receive Christ** into their lives.



We had about 140 volunteers from many different countries come and serve on the second Wave.



The guy with the glasses on is Rafal and he came to the building project with me. We became friends with him while we were living in Poland. Please pray for him, he grew up in a Catholic family and has an understanding of God but no relationship with Jesus yet.



Many of the building sites had no power so the tools had to be run and charged from a generator.

The other thing I wanted to give you an update on is the **Chernyavka village heating project**. We have been working on. In the village of Chernyavka which is 70 km outside of Vinnytsia there is a preschool that was no longer in use and since the full scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia has been used a housing for internally displaced people. Previously only 2 of the rooms had heating from fires places which allowed the refugees to get through last winter but with some difficulty so we agreed with the village council to get the old central heating system functioning again. It turned out to be in worse condition than we were told and it all took a lot more time and money that we thought but it is functional and producing heat though there is still some of the finishing work to do. We hired some of the refugee men to do the labouring part of the work and the more specialised work we hired a crew that does heating projects and our team managed the project and did a huge number of trips back and forth to deliver the materials needed.

**Praise God the heating is working!**



This is the preschool from the outside. It's about 400 square meters and has 12 refugees living in it.

So we have now been in **Lviv (Ukraine)** for 4 months and we are starting to feel more settled in, we have found a Church to go to and have started to make some friends and it is good to be close to Oksana's mum and dad and they love getting to see the grandkids more often.

As YWAM Ukraine's leader I am still working out **how to best serve our missionaries** in this time as many of the ministries we are all doing now are often very emotionally stressful, God is sustaining us but we are very aware of the need for **prayerful support**.

Please keep Oksana and I and the kids in your **prayers and all of our YWAM missionaries** here in Ukraine. Thank you very much for your love and care for us and have wonderful Christmas celebrating our Prince of Peace!

**Andy & Oksana**

*PS. If you would like to join our update channel "Reach Ukraine" this is where we post regular updates (weekly) and you can quickly and easily ask us questions. We run it on the chat app "Telegram". Once you have the app just scan the QR code or click on the link below and you will be transported to "Reach Ukraine" t join it :)*

**Merry Christmas :)**

