



Photo: Young people relaxing at SUPA North Camp

A SUMMER Ripe for Ministry

SU Tas is gearing up for another season of ministry! After coming through COVID-19, many people have a renewed openness to the existence of God and exploring meaning and purpose. What an exciting opportunity to engage.

SU Tasmania was recently sent a copy of the *Future of the Australian Church*, a report put together by research group McCrindle. This summarises and analyses prominent Christian leaders' insights into key trends that will influence the Church in the future. Although it has a multitude of useful information, one future trend in particular stood out: **Australians are disillusioned with the Church as an institution, but spiritually hungry.** It reads, 'Christian leaders are seeing a spiritual hunger in Australia. Times of change, hardship and crisis can often cause people to think more

deeply about what matters. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen people across the globe reconsidering their values and searching for community, connection and meaning in their lives'.

As we embark on another Summer season of Scripture Union ministry, please pray with us as our faithful volunteers seek to reach out to the 'spiritually hungry' across local communities in Tasmania. We are coming to the end of a year of turmoil, and many have become disillusioned and distrustful. Societal structures and freedoms that we normally take for granted, especially in the West, are no longer as secure as we thought they were. In April, we saw for ourselves in Tasmania just how quickly life could change as some of our freedoms were taken away.

Although life is looking a little brighter now (praise God!), people are still feeling somewhat cautious and unsettled. Inwardly there is a search for answers to life's greater purpose. This is where Scripture Union ministries are able to step in and point them to what is secure – the eternal hope found in Jesus. As the Psalmist says, "He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he

set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand".

Scripture Union Summer experiences impact communities with this hope in a variety of ways. We primarily aim to reach out to people who little or no other contact with the Church and the Good News of Jesus. Many participants face difficult home or social pressures. For others, the barrenness of a materialistic lifestyle threatens to extinguish meaning and values. Still others, from a Christian background, are struggling to work out how their families' faith is relevant to their world.

And let's not forget our team leaders. As they help young people grapple with these issues, they learn to depend on the Holy Spirit. Their own lives are challenged and changed. They learn to communicate in new and creative ways. And they experience rich Christian community in the atmosphere of fun and fellowship.

We know that spectacular 'results' are rare. But the kind of change that ultimately builds disciples is happening through these events. This is a season ripe for ministry, and we know all of this hard work is worthwhile. We are so encouraged by your prayers and support in this ministry.

Give thanks for the opportunity to reach out to the spiritually hungry this Summer. Please pray for SU volunteers: that they will be equipped and empowered to reach out where needed.

*McCrindle (2020). 'Future of the Church in Australia'. Available at <https://mccrindle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/reports/Future-of-the-Church-in-Australia-Report-2020.pdf>

A LIFE CHANGED AT SUPA CAMP NORTH

Stephanie Sebastian, our Northern Regional Coordinator, shares an exciting story from SUPA Camp North last school holidays:

The theme of this year's SUPA camp was 'Fly Sky High' as we explored who Jesus is, how Jesus loves the outsiders, and being let down by friends or family and forgiveness.

Julie* was one camper who had attended other SU camps and came from a challenging background. When I picked her up from her home on the way to SUPA Camp at Carnaroo, her questions to me focused on getting a tongue piercing or a belly button one.

On Monday evening at camp, we watched the movie, "Overcomer". During the last 15 minutes of the movie she began talking in depth with one of the leaders about who she is, about Jesus and forgiveness, and belonging to the Christian family. When the movie finished, she declared to the team, "I want to be a Christian!"

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Her questions ... changed from piercings to: 'How can I be a follower of Jesus?'
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The focus of her questions to me suddenly changed from piercings to: "How can I be a follower of Jesus?". I asked her what prompted her decision, and she said that it had been the many SU camps she attended, the love she has experienced from her SU camp family, and finally a scene in the movie. The movie involves a teenage girl becoming a Christian and forgiving her father who abandoned her when she was small. Near the end of the movie the girl says, "I forgave him for leaving. It feels like he came back from the dead."

On Monday night, the team prayed with her and she radiated pure joy. On Tuesday morning, I chatted a bit more with her and tried to summarise the gospel in a way that she could easily understand. As a teenager, she struggles with her identity and could relate to the movie in her life. I believe she understood that the Lord loves her just the way she is. She responded, "Thank you for telling me, it means so much to me".

Through SU Tas ministries like these, the gospel is bearing fruit and changing lives. This could not happen without your support, so thank you!

*Name changed for privacy reasons



Summer prayer map

WE NEED YOUR PRAYERS THIS SUMMER!

We're excited about our upcoming Summer experiences in January. Could you please pray for us as we seek to reach our communities with the love of Jesus?

18-21 JAN

EAST DEVONPORT HOLIDAY HAPPENING

- In 2021 we're celebrating 30 years of Holiday Happening. Pray that we will continue to build meaningful connections with the community.
- This year we're running things a bit differently due to the old site being used for COVID-19 testing. Pray that the new location will enhance our program and the event will run smoothly.
- We have quite a few new team members this year. Pray for good team spirit and unity.



Barrie Cole
Team Director

4-8 JAN

ST HELENS MISSION

- This year our team is quite small. Please pray for their safety as we can't afford to have anyone sick.
- Pray for our procedures and processes for effective COVID-19 cleaning.
- Pray that God would draw the right children to come along to hear the gospel message.
- Pray that the family BBQ on the foreshore will build good connections.



James Todd
Team Director & Regional Coordinator (NW)

14-19 JAN

STANLEY BEACH MISSION

- We usually run 'laser tag' to help attract people to our program. There is some uncertainty due to funding, so pray for clarity on that.
- Pray for strength for the team and safety for the children.
- Pray for continued bridge-building and relationships with the community, long term campers and regulars.
- Pray that our awesome speakers will touch lives and turn them in the right direction.
- Pray for gospel seeds that will last.



Kristyn Rostan
Team Director

FAMILY FUN DAY JANUARY

- Please pray for the family fun day that the Family Holiday South team will be running at Blue Lagoon.
- Pray that the Black and White theme - about how God loves us, no matter who we are or what we have done - will resonate with participants.
- Some team members are recovering from illness and injury: please pray for healing and that they would be fit to take part.
- Pray that the event will be an exciting springboard to Family Holiday 2022!



Stephanie Sebastian
Regional Coordinator (North)



Nom Woolley & Ruth Pinkerton
Team Co-Directors

FAMILY CAMP NORTH 22-26 JAN

- Pray for the team putting together a fun-filled program that brings families closer together and most importantly, closer to the Lord.
- Pray that schools will identify families who would benefit from this experience.
- Give thanks for the new camp director, Charlie. Pray that the Lord will fill her with courage and wisdom as she continues on her journey from SU junior leader to team member and now camp director.

There are a number of ways you can support us:

Prayer: this is the most important! Use this map for prayer ideas.

Give: some of our experiences need financial support. Please use the slip provided to send through a donation.

Attend: if you are close by, you may consider booking in. Go to www.sutas.org.au/camps for details.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR FUNDRAISERS!

We'd like to thank every one who came along to our Spring Fundraisers across the state in November and early December. It was wonderful to spend time together to hear from Peter James (Transition Management Executive for the SU National Project) on video, stories about our life-changing work and to raise crucial funds. Many thanks to those who hosted, sent out invitations, cooked dinners or brought along supplies. Thank you also to our wonderful volunteers and staff who made these events such a success. One supporter commented that the progressive dinners in the North "were the best SU dinners ever!"

If you were not able to make it to one of our events, but would still like to make a donation, please fill in the slip along with this newsletter. Your support is vital in helping us make a difference in the lives of children across our state.



Building Lasting Connections

NEW REGIONAL COORDINATOR FOR SOUTHERN TASMANIA



We are excited to announce the appointment of our new Regional Coordinator in the South, **Jaco Classen**, who started at the beginning of November. Jaco will play a pivotal role in connecting with chaplaincies and established ministries in the South. He will also seek to build new connections and dream with volunteers about future ministry opportunities. Here we find out a bit more about Jaco and his plans in the role:

Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

Seven and a half years ago, my family and I arrived from South Africa to Western Australia. Here we started in a big remote mining town of Kalgoorlie, where I helped to pastor in a church plant and was doing school chaplaincy. After a few years, I was offered the Regional Coordinator position for the Goldfields. I had a vast area that I covered and the furthest school I visited was 600km from Kalgoorlie. I now live in Kingston with my wife Denika and two teenage boys, and worship at Cornerstone Presbyterian Church in Hobart. I have always been involved in church ministry myself.

What are you excited about in this position?

This role brings back the passion and trust I have in the chaplaincy school program. I value chaplains, and the service they offer to their school, with their different set of skills. I am looking forward to journeying with the chaplains, the school, and many volunteers. I hope that we can connect more people to the chaplaincy service, as supporters of the program. I also hope to expand our ministries and reach out to more churches in the Southern region.

What are your priorities in this role?

To meet the chaplains and their supporters, to plan for the next three months, and to understand SU culture - who are we and how we do things at SU.

How can we support you in this role?

Please pray for me to listen well and to act wisely.

You can contact Jaco on 0478 082 230 or jaco.classen@sutas.org.au.

FROM THE CHAIR

IMMANUEL –

God with us!

Most of us like to have ordered lives. We make plans. We plan for what we will eat, what we will do, who we will see. This year has been a year of not being able to plan – or of seeing our plans not come to fruition. For many of us this has been unsettling. When will we see loved ones? When can we worship together again?

For Scripture Union Tasmania, this year has presented many challenges. We have not been able to run many of our normal ministry events. We have had leadership changes and staff coming and going.

It is timely and relevant to remember that Christmas is about the coming of Immanuel. Matthew 1:23 reads "... they shall call his name Immanuel." Immanuel in Hebrew means **God is with us**. What a precious truth this is for all of us. God has been with us through all the events of 2020. God will be with us as we plan and look forward to 2021.

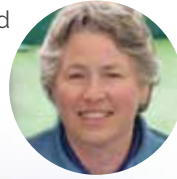
When we have this truth as our basis for all we do, we can be excited by the opportunities that we have as a movement, as we move into a new year. Across the state, children and families are looking forward to our camps and missions. The Boots N' All bushwalking group already have their 2021 calendar out with walks covering different areas of our beautiful state. Supporters have gathered at our events and shared stories and experiences.

There is much to look forward to and because God is with those who are followers of Jesus, we can be confident He will lead us, guide us and strengthen us for all that lies ahead.

May you all have a blessed and safe Christmas.

H. Ridley

Helen Ridley
Chair - SU Tasmania



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

- Give thanks to God for sending his Son into the world and giving his life for us. *Thank you, Father, that we can remember the precious gift of Jesus each year at Christmas.*
- Give thanks that we are able to hold the majority of our experiences this Summer, despite the challenges of 2020. Pray for our teams' preparations and that they will be vigilant in following COVID-19 procedures.
- Pray for Tasmanian churches and ministry leaders as many have found the last year extremely challenging. Pray that they may have wisdom, strength and perseverance.
- Give thanks for the Spring Fundraisers and the enthusiasm of those who attended. Pray that God would continue to meet the financial needs of SU during this time of change.
- Pray for SU Tas as we seek to explore being a united national movement and serving Christ together. Pray that volunteers and supporters will feel engaged on this journey.

MORE MINISTRY, MORE MISSION!

SU NATIONAL: UPDATE

We give thanks that under God, and through your support, SU Tasmania has achieved so much – reaching many thousands of young people over 50 years of ministry.

In other states and territories, Scripture Union movements have also seen, and are seeing, amazing stories of hope and transformation as well.

However, as we have been collaborating with other movements, there has been a consensus that the number of people we're reaching across Australia is relatively small. With the difficult financial environment we find ourselves in today, this is likely to get even more challenging.

By pooling our resources together under a national movement, we believe we can increase our reach so more people will be impacted by SU ministry.

The plan is to not only birth new SU ministries on the ground, but also equip

and resource churches and other frontline ministry workers. In Tasmania we have seen some of the fruit of collaboration already, through the funding of our new Regional Coordinator in the South.

In preparation for a merger, some of you may be aware that Scripture Union has now appointed a new national governance board, and key leaders from all the states and territories are currently meeting together to discuss the specifics of doing a merger. These initial discussions have been encouraging.

What is vital for us is that our local supporter base continues to be engaged, that we answer your questions and get your feedback. With this in mind, we will be preparing a FAQ sheet to many of the questions submitted by SU supporters that will be available early next year. We would love you to get in touch if you have further questions and ideas.

global WEEK OF PRAYER

The theme for Scripture Union's Global Week of Prayer was **'our Limitless God'**, taken from Acts 17:22-28. This year we started with a multilingual launch event held on Zoom. It was a time of expressing our dependence on God together as one big family and a testament that prayer builds community.

During the week, SU movements and supporters around the world met in their offices, churches, homes and online to pray for the following: the global Church, the impact of the pandemic on SU, SU and global leadership, for the world to know Jesus and thanksgiving and reliance on God.

The week finished off with a 24-hour global online prayer event, with 46 different SU movements taking it in turn to lead us in prayer. As Monika, our International Director, said afterwards, "It was an amazing experience to learn of the joys and challenges of our movements and bring them to the throne of God. We laughed, prayed, cried and sang together and got little tasters of cultural diversity and spiritual unity. Global SU fellowship and community at its best. Thank you all."

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ABOUT US:

Scripture Union Tasmania is an interdenominational Christian organisation that works with local churches and communities to bring hope and God's love to children, young people and their families.