

PENNANT HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH

OUR JOURNEY

In 2009 the church leadership developed a narrative vision document, *'PHBC – As We Could Be'*. This document was a deliberately aspirational attempt to describe what God's church at Pennant Hills Baptist might look like in five years' time. How might our church vision and values be worked out in practical ways up to the year 2015?

Since the drafting of that document, God has blessed his church in many ways. Our facilities have been significantly upgraded, our families and children's ministry has grown, and our small groups have thrived. Not everything we hoped for has been realised, but we have much to be thankful for.

In 2014 we started praying for a time of re-visioning to start in 2015 in which we would look to the next five years, towards 2020, and consider the sort of church God might call us to be.

Our previous vision was built around the metaphor of a garden. It was thought at the time that, although our church was healthy, it was somewhat like an overgrown garden with little order. Provided you could find good soil and sunlight, you would prosper. However, it was not always easy to find a place within the garden or to thrive. Furthermore, some demographics, particularly young families, struggled to fit in. Changes were needed so that we might be more ordered, provide space, and allow the garden to prosper and grow.

Much has changed. We have grown and been blessed by more families. Now it is time to grow stronger and be fruitful. As the garden grows, so it produces fruit. Seed then spreads, takes root, and God's kingdom grows.

Looking towards 2020, we long to see our church become an increasingly fruitful, growing, expanding garden. The 'narrative vision' that follows, paints an aspirational picture of what church life could be by 2020. It envisages our church having grown in three separate ways:

Firstly, we hope to see a significant increase in spiritual and relational health and vigour. Everything flows from the strength of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, both as individuals and together. This must always be our first priority.

Secondly, we want to see our church being more fruitful. Fruit, by its very nature, falls from the tree, sets seed, and leads to new growth in new areas. We long to be a blessing. We long to see God's kingdom grow, not just amongst our friends and family, but throughout Australia, and throughout the world.

Thirdly, we hope to increase our capacity to ensure that there is always space for growth. That is, we want to establish systems and processes and equip our people so as to be able to grow numerically, in our ministry impact, and in our spiritual development.

God's garden is well established and lovingly tended.

The time has come for us to bear much fruit, fruit that will last, fruit that will bring glory to God and great joy to our souls.

John Macindoe
Lead Pastor

Jonny Lam
Pastor

Michael Maddison
Secretary/Elder

Simon Lau
Treasurer/Elder

David Sterritt
Elder

Ben Wong
Elder

15th November 2015

PENNANT HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH

TOWARDS 2020

Our Vision – Healthy, Fruitful, With Space to Grow

Our God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us. He has a glorious vision for Pennant Hills Baptist Church. What follows, deliberately written in the present tense, is a description of what we hope God's church at Pennant Hills Baptist would look like by the year 2020. It is a big, bold, grand vision, the sort that only God can call into being. But he is able. We look to him for fruitfulness and blessing.

Healthy

Pennant Hills Baptist Church is in good health. God's Spirit is with us doing a work of restoration, transforming us ever more into the likeness of Jesus. We are fit, ready and willing to play our unique role within God's eternal mission.

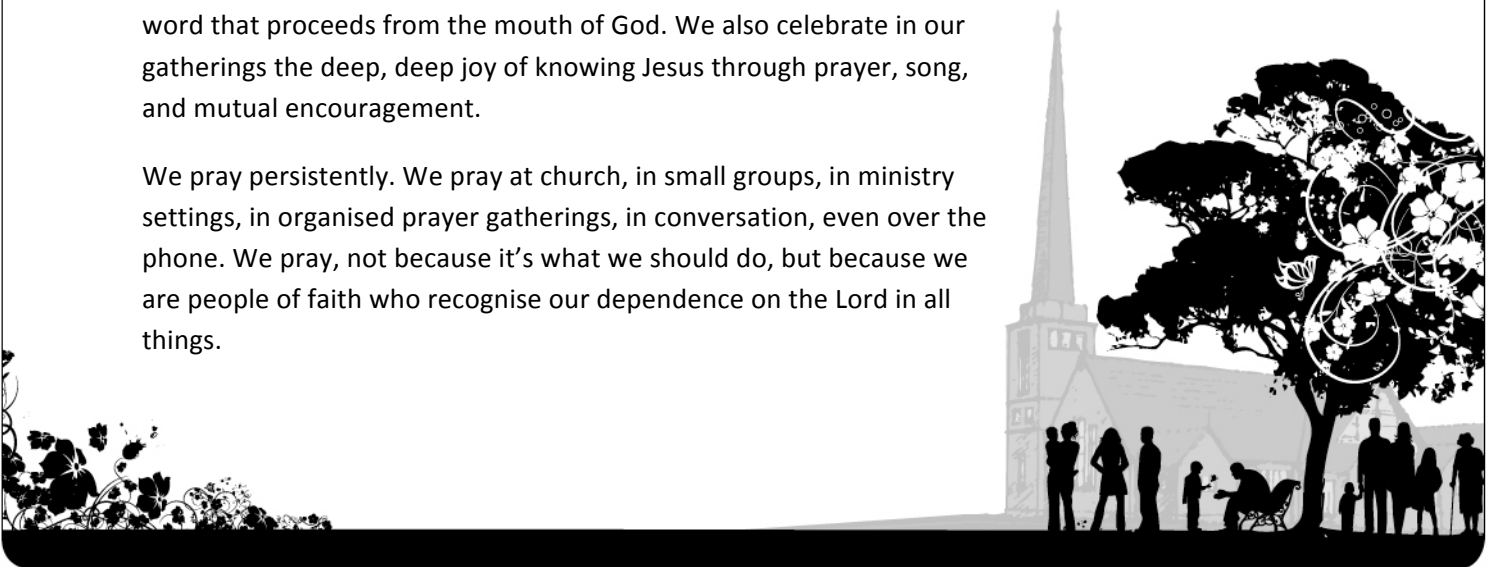
We do not fear change, nor the unknown. We are not afraid to live sacrificially and take godly risks for the Kingdom. Above all, we fear and love God. We live expectantly as exiles, waiting for Jesus' return, the consummation of his kingdom, and the renewal of all things.

Fundamental to our health is that we are a relational church. Healthy relationships - with God, with family, with others - are central to all that we do and are. Within our church family there are young and old, people who have come to Australia from many nations, and people from many different walks of life, mixed together and relating to one another. There is within our church a place for each one to take root, be fed, grow, serve, and be fruitful. The diversity of our church family is obvious. Likewise, our unity, as one family in Christ Jesus, is equally obvious. In fact, our differences bind us closer together and give rich character to our corporate life.

We love to eat and drink together, breaking bread with thanksgiving in our hearts for all that God has provided for us in his Son. We willingly hold each other accountable and seek to spur one another on towards love and good deeds.

When we gather we are eager to be taught from God's Word, for we know that we live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. We also celebrate in our gatherings the deep, deep joy of knowing Jesus through prayer, song, and mutual encouragement.

We pray persistently. We pray at church, in small groups, in ministry settings, in organised prayer gatherings, in conversation, even over the phone. We pray, not because it's what we should do, but because we are people of faith who recognise our dependence on the Lord in all things.





Fruitful

Such is our health that one of our greatest joys is in bearing fruit. We delight in overflow; in letting blessings spill from us to others.

Over recent years we have had the joy of identifying, training, and sending out many from our church in teams to support new initiatives and to grow God's kingdom in strategic ways. This has been costly in terms of relationships, finances, and resources. But we have been glad to count the cost, realising that such generosity is the natural consequence of being a healthy, fruit-bearing church.

We have intentionally invested in those with leadership potential, supporting them with training and personal encouragement. Many of these people have left our fellowship to take on significant leadership roles within other churches and in overseas mission. A key indication of our health is the number and calibre of believers who have been sent from us to be a blessing to others.

We continue to be generous supporters of Christian ministry and good works outside of our direct sphere of influence. In recent years we have significantly increased our financial giving, prayer support, and practical encouragement towards overseas and local mission activities, and in ministry amongst the poor and vulnerable.

Most importantly, as a healthy church, each member is bearing fruit, sharing hope and alerting people to the universal reign of God in Christ as they go about their daily activities. Wherever God has put us, we are ambassadors, salt and light, furthering God's mission of restoration in the world.

Through God's church the kingdom is growing, sometimes unseen by usual measures, but always in remarkable ways.


With Space to Grow

There is little sense in our church life that we are 'at the limit'. Rather, the overwhelming feeling is one of excitement about where God is leading us as we watch his kingdom grow. People are coming to faith and being baptised and so our church services are increasing in attendance, despite the fact that many have left us. Those who have left do so not because of disappointment, but with that strange mixture of sadness and joy as they intentionally uproot their lives in order to bear fruit for God's kingdom.

We have developed effective systems and structures to manage the growing number of people in our church community, which has doubled in size over the past five years. Our staff team has expanded to meet the challenge of equipping the church to care for a growing number of people.

Newcomers are welcomed and integrated with warmth and purpose, small groups are well supported and coordinated, and pastoral care is readily available to all those in need. We have processes for guiding disciples towards maturity. All of our ministries and services have adequate resources to function as they should; in fact, we have developed more than enough people capacity to meet our weekly ministry demands.





Our well managed systems and structures, whilst not being the main game, help to ensure that no one falls through the cracks, that all of our activities are equipped with adequate resources, and that we are all encouraged and energised to serve the Lord.

Fruitful Garden

Watered by the Spirit, drenched in the sun of Jesus' love, everything in God's garden at Pennant Hills thrives in beauty and radiant health. New plants continue to find good soil in which to grow. Much fruit is joyfully sent from the garden to set seed, take root, and grow elsewhere for the glory of God. The garden is tended and brimming with life.

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever.

