

Nick's News

NEWS UPDATE FROM NEW ZEALAND



G'day from New Zealand!

Hello once again from New Zealand. Right now here we are smack in the middle of winter, which means that the weather is cold and generally wet, and the days are short. However, there has been lots happening that I have to share with you!

You may notice that this newsletter is looking different to previous newsletters. I decided to revamp the newsletter to give it a fresh look. I hope you like it!

I don't know how the year has been going for you so far. For some of you it might be a great year and you couldn't be happier with how it is faring. For others of you, it might be a difficult year and you might be struggling to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

If you are in this position, let me share some of Psalm 139 with you, which has encouraged me in recent times:

O Lord, you have examined my heart
and know everything about me.
You know when I sit down or stand up.
You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
You see me when I travel
and when I rest at home.
You know everything I do.
You know what I am going to say
even before I say it, Lord.
You go before me and follow me.
You place your hand of blessing on my head.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too great for me to understand!

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.
Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.
You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.
You saw me before I was born.
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.
Every moment was laid out
before a single day had passed.

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God.
They cannot be numbered!
I can't even count them;
they outnumber the grains of sand!

Psalms 139:1-6; 13-18

As I said, I don't know how your year is going, whether it is a wonderful or a difficult year, but we can be comforted by the fact that we have a God who knows everything about us. Not only that, but He goes before us and follows us with His hand of blessing. On top of this, God sculpted you into the person that you are, with your unique personality and talents. And not only, He loves you and thinks about you all the time! My prayer is that this Psalm encourages you as it has done to me.

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Update on the Youth...



I want to start by sharing some really exciting news. About a month ago, Lisette Steel, one of our youth, decided to commit her life to Christ in baptism! It is so encouraging to see young people make commitments like this. It is also encouraging to see Lisette grow in her faith and develop into a mature woman. Please be praying for her as she begins this new journey with Jesus.



Lisette Steel

I mentioned in the last newsletter that Tanya Buddy, who was in the youth for a number of years, was preparing to head to the US to complete the AIM program.

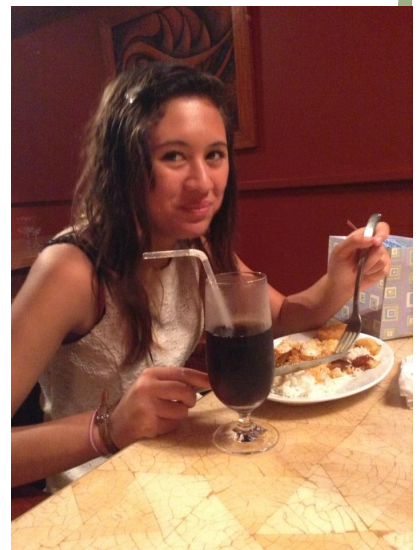
Tanya left 2 weeks ago and is now visiting some family in Michigan before heading to Lubbock, Texas to begin the program. Tanya has shown some awesome growth in her life and faith in recent months. Please pray that this continues and that God uses AIM to grow Tanya and that He uses Tanya to bless others at the same time.

At the moment as a youth group we are working through the book of James together. This book was chosen because it is so practical. The basic theme of James is if you say that you are a Christian, then your life needs to show it. This is a message that applies to all of us, but especially to teenagers. There are so many worldly influences in our society that are trying to pull them away from God. The book of James is a great book to

counteract the notion that you can say you follow God but live differently throughout the week. The youth are expected to read the book of James every week and so far the response has been very positive.

I have some other exciting news to share. God has opened the door for myself and Brianna (a young lady from the US who is studying at the Bible College) to study with 2 of our youth girls, Tracey and Michaela! We have been studying together every Monday afternoon, and both Brianna and I are seeing God work. The girls are really taking in what is being studied, and we are really seeing them come out of their shell and be themselves. Please pray for this study and for Tracey and Michaela, that they will make that decision to follow Christ.

In the meantime we have some other exciting things planned for the youth over the rest of the year which I will share with you in the next newsletter.



Tracey Austin



The youth playing some games at our house during a youth night.

Bex's Bit

This is something new that is going to be included in these email updates—an update from my wife as well:

January and February have been very busy but exciting months for me. I am so glad to be back in our own house and enjoying being a stay at home Mum. Recently Noah and I started learning from Cristy Neves, a third year Bible College student. Cristy is working with Noah and I on how to teach babies holistically about God and us as his children. I am also excited about the fact that I have more time to support Nick in his ministry and to be doing my own ministries.

I felt totally honoured when a lady who comes to church but is not yet a

Christian approached me and asked if I would be willing to do a Bible study with her this year. I was so excited to be able to do this and it was a confirmation that we finished up at Oasis at the right time as I was able to say yes. We have started going through the book of Luke together. This is the first one-on-one study that I have done so please be praying for me as I take on this new challenge. I have also begun walking with a friend from my antenatal class three times a week who I am hoping to share Christ with as we walk and talk.

I am also leading the women's ministry this year and we were able to kick that off recently with an Amazing Race for the women. I am excited to be working with my team mate, Veronica. We are planning on

doing a range of activities this year such as women's reflection and study days, which will be fun events to

relax and encourage one another, study the Bible and more. I am also excited about starting up with Veronica a young women's Bible study. We have a small group of young women, many of whom are new Christians so we are looking at doing studies to help them build up their knowledge of who God is and learning to lean on him and find our security in Him. We have a study to start on but would like to do a Beth Moore study. It is called So Long Insecurity and costs US\$250 for a group of 10. If anyone would be willing to donate funds to help us purchase this study please contact Nick or myself via the email address provided at the end of the newsletter. Please keep all these things in your prayers.



Church Visioning

As I mentioned during the last newsletter, the Otumoetai congregation is currently going through a period of revisioning. This process is grounded in God's nature and God's Word. The aim is, as we get to understand who God is and what God's mission is for the world, that He will reveal to us how we can specifically join in with Him in His mission in this part of the world. This is truly an exciting time for us!

On Saturday June 15, we as a church spent 24 hours in prayer for this process, beginning at 10am on Saturday and finishing at 10am Sunday in time for the morning service. During that time, we had several areas set up for group prayer, individual prayer and journaling,

and for praise and worship. Throughout the 24 hour period, approximately two-thirds of the congregation attended, which is fantastic considering that quite a number of people were away traveling that weekend! The church is truly embracing this visioning process, and there is a real sense of excitement and anticipation for what God is going to do through this. Bex and I were greatly privileged to have been part of

organising the 24 hours of prayer. James 5:13 says that the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. If this is the case, how much more powerful and effective will the prayers of a whole church be! Please be praying for us as we seek God's direction for the future. Pray that we will be on board with what He is doing and be willing to obey His will, whatever that is.



FINANCIAL SITUATION

I'd like to thank the various individuals and congregations that support the work that Bex and I are a part of here. We truly are grateful.

I'm going to list some of the needs that Bex and I have at the moment. Right now our financial situation is very tight. I am still approximately \$500 per month short of the income that I need. In the last 3 months our cars have needed unexpected repairs that have cost us more than \$2,000. Our oven is also falling apart, with only 2 of our

stove elements working properly. Someone tried to fix them for us but that wasn't successful. It will cost approximately \$1,200 to replace it.

Finally, this month our income is short of paying our basic expenses by \$200 (by basic expenses I mean mortgage, food, petrol, power and associated costs). I fully trust that God will provide, but as you can see, it is a difficult time for us financially.

If you are able to contribute to the work in NZ

It would be so much appreciated! My desire is to serve the Kingdom to the best of my ability here, but I also strongly desire to provide for my family.

If you have any questions, or would like to contribute anything, feel free to contact me at nick.la.spina1985@gmail.com, or by phone on +64 27 610 9222.

See ya next time!

Because of Christ

Nick

Prayer Requests

- The visioning process for the Otumoetai church.
- The Bible study with Tracey and Michaela.
- Growth in the youth—both spiritually and numerically.
- Our Shepherds as they lead the congregation.
- Bex and my marriage, and that we can be godly parents to Noah.
- My sister Jodie and her continued struggles.
- Financial support for Bex and I.
- Tanya Buddy as she settles into the AIM program in Lubbock, Texas.
- Those who are struggling in their faith.
- For God to continue to build momentum in the youth throughout this year.
- That those who haven't committed their lives to Christ will do so.
- My fellow teammates, Andrew and Veronica Gearhart and Amy Alfreda as they work to serve the church in their various roles.