

Nick's News

NEWS UPDATE FROM NEW ZEALAND



G'day from New Zealand!

G'day from down under! As I write this I realize that it's only a little more than 2 months until Christmas. Sorry if that scared you a little bit!

A personal highlight for Bex and I over the last few weeks has been seeing our little man turn 1. Noah is growing and learning so quickly. He's almost at the point of walking, and can say a few words as well. Bex and I are loving being parents and we feel truly grateful and blessed to have such a happy and healthy boy. God has also used Noah to bring me joy when life seems difficult.

We had a birthday party for him and we were joined by a number of people from church, as well as family. My mum and grandma came over from Australia, and we were also paid a surprise visit by my sister Shannon and our nephew Hudson!



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We were very excited to see them as well. Here are a couple of pics from his 1st birthday party for you to look at—he loved his first experience of cake!

There has also been a lot of things happening here in the life of the church, so there is much to report!

The faithful love of the LORD never ends!

His mercies never cease.

Great is his faithfulness;

his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!"

The LORD is good to those who depend on him,

to those who search for him.

So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD.

Lamentations 3:22-26



Update on the Youth...

Throughout the winter months, we were blessed to have 2 young women from Harding University in the States come and spend time with us for 6 weeks as interns. Their names are Savannah Lee and Kelsey Taylor. Savannah spent time with us last year and Kelsey was a first time visitor. These girls worked so hard for Otumoetai and had such a wonderful, serving attitude. They spent a considerable amount of their time working with the youth

and this was so beneficial for the youth group.

Some of the things that they were a part of were planning and running activities, spending time with youth one-on-one, helping plan classes, planning a lock-in and scavenger hunt and other things. They truly did a fantastic job and we were sorry to see them go.

Brianna (a valuable helper with the youth) and I are in the process of studying with

two of the youth girls—Tracey and Michaela. We have been spending time working through an overview of the Bible, so that they can see the big picture of how the Bible fits together and understand God's plan of salvation. We are currently working through Abraham and how he fits into God's plan.

It has been really encouraging to see how the girls have responded to this. They have been very positive, interested and engaged. Brianna and I have also noticed that they are growing in confidence and the more time we spend with them, the more they are letting us get to know who they really are. They are starting to see that following God is actually worth doing. Please pray for Tracey and Michaela as we continue to study with them.



Kelsey Taylor and Savannah Lee



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

Bex's Bit

These past three months have been busy and full of great things.

The most exciting for me of course was Noah's first birthday. We had a large number of family here. My Grandma came up from Christchurch and Nicks Grandma, Mum, sister and nephew came from Australia. We realise how blessed Noah is to have so many people who love him and are able to reflect God's love to him.



I have also really enjoyed being a part of the visioning team for Otumoetai. Over the last few months I have been helping the church move forward with this. Myself, Veronica and Nathan (they are both also on the visioning team) sat down with all of the responses from the values nights that the

church participated in and we condensed them down to 4 specific values which Nick has put on the next page. We also made sure that these values were backed up by Scripture and did our best to make them easy for the congregation to understand and remember. Right now we are working through those values and that will take a few months.

Another highlight of the last few months was planning and running a murder mystery dinner for the young adults. Our Harding interns (Kelsey and Savannah) also helped me plan it. In the end around 30 people came to our 50s themed night. It was a fantastic night and the feedback was extremely positive.

I have been feeling very busy with everything lately, so I plan to slow down over the next couple of weeks which will be a nice treat! However, I feel very blessed to be able to be involved



with what is happening here. It is an exciting time for us. Please pray for Otumoetai at this important time, and also please pray for us as a family as we strive to get the ministry and family life balance right.



Church Visioning

As a church we have been seeking God's direction for us as a body. We have been working through our 'values', in other words, what is important to us as a church and what makes us tick?

We have come up with 4 values, and I would like to share those with you:

1. Jesus (Philippians 2:5-11)

We value how Jesus displayed love, leadership, acceptance, and sacrifice throughout his earthly journey. We are compelled to live to the standard Jesus set and to let our lives reflect his story.

2. Transformation (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

We value the way peoples' lives are continually transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. God's grace and mercy allows humanity to live forgiven, free and fearless lives within Gods intended plan for all people to be restored to Him.

3. Community (Acts 2:42-47)

We value our diverse community and relationships. We believe it's essential to constantly reach for our full potential in Christ together through communal prayer, worship, studying scripture, and sharing our

stories. We aspire to equip all ages to utilize their spiritual gifts to serve each other.

4. Outreach (Matthew 28:18-20)

We value the men, women, and children who need to know Jesus Christ. We desire to share the Gospel and proactively show love and compassion to people in Tauranga, NZ and the World.

The next step is to spend the next few months working through this in detail and then seek God on how we can live this out in our community. Please pray for us as we work through this!

SUPPORT SITUATION & DIRECTION

I really appreciate each and every individual and congregation that has financially supported me this year. It truly means a lot that you are willing to support God's work in this part of the world.

In December I will be losing approximately \$330 per month of support. We have no surplus with our budget each month—what we get just covers our bills (unless an unexpected expense comes up). I'd like to invite you to prayerfully consider

making a one-time or ongoing contribution to the work here. If you would like more information about the work here in NZ, or would like to offer some support, email me at nick.la.spina1985@gmail.com, or contact me on Facebook.

Another thing I would like to invite you to pray about over the coming days and weeks is for direction for my role. As we work through this process of visioning, my desire is to be open to God's leading, and if that means

altering my role to better suit his plan here and to maximize any spiritual gifts God has given me, then I want to be on board with this.

Please pray for me as I seek this from God.

Look forward to catching up 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.
- Direction for my role at Otumoetai.
- Those who are struggling in their faith.
- 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.
- Andrew and Veronica as they are currently 9 weeks pregnant.