

MOUNTAINSIDE RUMBLINGS

Mountainside
Lutheran Church

February 2021
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Welcoming 2021



As I was sitting down to think about what to write for our first Mountainside Rumbings for the year, a bible verse from Proverbs 3:5-6 came to mind.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (NKJ)

As we are already in February, and so now into the year of 2021, I have been reflecting on what could this year bring? What are the things that this coming year holds for us? These are the questions that I like to ask at the beginning of every new year.

I look forward to working with Felix Tong and the Chinese speaking people of Mountainside as we seek to work together, to build and establish a thriving community that is open for outreach. I look forward to having some of our young people in our congregation being confirmed in the faith this year.

I look forward to working on ways to further develop our children's ministry at Mountainside. These are just a few things that I have been thinking about. But, as I am thinking about them, I am also mindful of the fact that this time last year, I had similar hopes and plans and things to look forward to, which of course were disrupted by COVID 19.

The year 2020 was a year that was like no other that I can remember. The lockdowns and the travel restrictions certainly had an impact. Numerous people from our community at Mountainside had relatives affected overseas, in various ways. There were many people in our community that were experiencing illness and grief and felt isolated. Add to this the move to an online worship format, which is good, but is nothing like the coming together in person. I could give many more examples, but I think I have made my point. 2020 was a very difficult year for many.

Many Christian's throughout the world, have been praying, seeking God, trying to understand what is going on. Why God would allow a thing like COVID to happen?

The thing that I have learned is that there are times in life, where we will simply do not understand the answer to the questions of why God allows what he does.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;" this scripture says to us.

Perhaps the simplest of lessons to take into a new year is that we can have many plans and goals, but we do not know what will happen. Therefore, we do not **rely** on our own understanding. The NRSV version uses the word 'insight' instead of 'understanding', which I think can also be a good way of thinking about this verse that can be helpful. We don't trust our own insights or understanding, but rather we trust God, the One who knows all things, and the One who has us in his hands., and the One who directs our paths in life.

I end with God's word through the Apostle Paul in the letter to the church at Rome which encourages:

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (NKJ).

Blessings to you all as we walk with the Lord this coming year.

Pastor Nich

Mountainside Chinese Section Events Update

Farewell Events for Pastor William & Laura



Bible Sharing with Students in Hong Kong

We connect with Rev. Albert Lau in Holy Word Lutheran Church and Lutheran Tsang Shing Siu Leun School in Hong Kong to share weekly Bible devotion with Pastor Nich.



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Chinese New Year—Year End Dinner (6 Feb)



Barbara Court April 1943—21st Feb 2020

Julie Routley Oct 1938—14th Sept 2020

Neil Lindstrom March 1932—8th Oct 2020

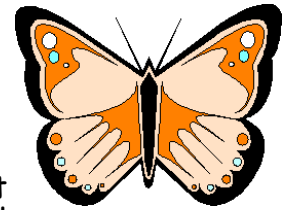
Gordon Rowland July 1923—15th Dec 2020

Paul Samsom May 1933—31st Dec 2020

*Loving
Memory*

*Our sincere love and condolences to the family & friends of all those
who have passed during the 2020 year*

MARY'S CORNER



Recap of 2020

In March we experienced what in my mind was almost unthinkable, a lockdown. During this time we had to cancel all programs like Tiny Tots, Sunday School and Supakidz. It soon became evident that we were not going to start the programs again soon and we needed to make plans and decisions to adjust to the new reality for a much longer period of time.

Tiny Tots:

We had to cancel all the Tiny Tots gatherings. In Level 2 we had a graduation for Aleefa. We restarted Tiny Tots in October. For the first gathering, all the Tiny Tots families met in Michael's Ave, Ellerslie for a picnic and we had a great time. For the last December meeting of 2020, we hosted a Tiny Tots Christmas party. We had a few Tiny Tots team meetings on Zoom to catch up and discuss plans during the year.

Sunday School:

Online Sunday School - As we were all in lockdown, in order to continue Sunday School, I started an online Sunday School programme in a printed version with materials and worksheets, so the children wouldn't miss Sunday School and can access resources anytime.

Virtual Sunday School - Later in the lockdown, we started virtual Sunday School on the Zoom platform so that we could interact with each other and can keep our Sunday School lively. We started with catch up sessions and prayer. This was continued till we restarted gathering physically.

We started practicing songs and a skit for our Christmas Eve service and also working on a Plan-B in case we had to go back into lockdown.

We had a few Sunday School team meetings virtually on the Zoom platform to catch up and discuss where we were at.

In the lockdown period, I made short films with our Sunday School children for Palm Sunday, Father's day and HBA.

Virtual HBA/Pastor's Appreciation Day: I thought we could not hold HBA this year due to the pandemic situation, but I thank God for giving me the idea of having HBA this year a bit differently, virtually on the Zoom platform. We had a couple of days of HBA for half a day with the theme "Lockdowns in the Bible". We had couple of children outside the church along with our Sunday School children. The following Sunday in the service we had Sunday School children performing along with an HBA presentation. Along with that our Sunday School children performed an item for 'Pastor's Appreciation Day' and honoured our dear Pastor Nich and Pastor William.

Women's Retreat: I started planning this from the beginning of the year, but due to lockdown, it was uncertain if we could run the program. I thank God for putting things into place. We had a program from 10 am to 1.30 pm for a few hours. I wanted all the women to come together to worship, take a word of encouragement and have some fun/relaxing time. We had Cat Coluccio as our speaker and 41 registrations. I would specially like to thank Fredric Doss, Anand Jala, family, and a few ladies for helping out and making the program a success.

I want to thank all our church family for all your support. I wish you all a fantastic blessed year ahead.

God Bless
Mary Jala

Holiday Bible Adventure via Zoom



Women's
Retreat
November

Many thanks to
Mary Jala for
organising and
running these
events (and all the
helpers too!)

We were so blessed
to be able to have
fellowship time
like this during
2020



Pastor's
Appreciation
Day

Poem &
Gifts of
thanks by
the children

Thank you!



PRAYER POINTS

In your prayers this month, please pray for the following:



We pray ...

- ✚ For our Parish AGM which will be held in March. We give thanks for all who have faithfully served on Parish Council and other committees over the past year.
- ✚ For the members of our Parish Council, Elders and all who serve our parish through our various ministries.
- ✚ For the churches & volunteers involved with the Mt Wellington Foodbank and all who work with those in need.
- ✚ For those who are grieving the loss of loved ones in recent times.
- ✚ For all who are sick or suffering at this time— may God give them strength and his healing comfort.
- ✚ For all schools, teachers, staff and students as they return to studies in February.
- ✚ For people who are feeling afraid or anxious with the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and restrictions.
- ✚ For people struggling with separation from family and friends due to border closures and lockdowns.
- ✚ For people suffering the economic effects of the current climate.

Messages of hope

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21st March Finding Hope in South Sudan (Interview)

At a time when our lives have never been so uncertain, Jonathan Krause from ALWS shares what we can learn from people who live with constant challenge and uncertainty.

28th March Living Water (Pastor Noel Due)

Are you thirsting for love? Forgiveness? Approval? Noel Due offers hope to quench those thirsts.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members of Mountainside are invited
to attend our AGM on
Sunday 7th March 2021
after the worship service.

This is an excellent opportunity to review the
year just gone, and to find out what's being
planned for 2021.

Don't forget that you have 3 options for receiving this newsletter—a printed copy available in the foyer of Mountainside Lutheran Church, we can post you a copy if you let us know your address, or we can email a copy in PDF format which you can enjoy in full colour!! Just contact the office and we will organise it for you. And please remember to let us know if your contact details change so we can alter our records accordingly.

Thanks very much.

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