

17 August 2018

I hope and pray you've been encouraged and built up in the faith this year at Vine Church, and that you're serving Jesus with joy and devotion.

What we've been learning

As you know, God speaks to us through his word and we've feasted on Sundays and in Community Groups on a range of topics and books of the Bible this year.

In term 1, we looked at the character and claims of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a series called **Introducing Jesus**. Every year we start with Jesus because there's a danger of forgetting how wonderful and great he is.

Also in term 1, we took the top four objections to Christianity (which your friends reported in a survey we conducted in December) and explored them in a series called **My Problem with Christianity**. We looked at the problems of sex, science, suffering and religious hypocrisy.

In term 2, we began to dig deep with a series on **The Power of Prayer**. For me, the highlight was looking at the forgotten practice of lament from Psalm 88. As a result of the series one person said, "I don't think I'm praying more, but I'm praying better."

Also in term 2, we dug into Romans 5-8 and looked at the struggle to live the **NEW** life Jesus has given. Bruce Linton finished out the series with a wonderful exposition of Romans 8 and the new perspective we all have in realizing that we are God's children, destined for heaven.

In term 3, we've arrived at the Old Testament book 1 Samuel and looking at how it shows us **The King's Heart** and ours.

I hope and pray you've been encouraged and built up in the faith this year as we've sat together under his word. Don't forget you can access all the messages from these series online at vinechurch.com.au/sermons.

Encouraging things

This year we've seen a number of encouraging things happening in our church.

- We've started 2 new community groups in our city and seen 24 people join a group this year.
- Over 140 people joined us for our annual weekend away at Collaroy and heard some amazing TEDx talks from people we love and some inspiring preaching on the Holy Spirit
- Over 43 women came together for a beautiful day at our annual women's conference, Nourish, where they heard stories from women in the church and got to hear Jenny Salt preach up a storm on the book of Ruth.
- Over 22 men headed along to Man Camp in February. We had a lot of fun swimming, playing footy, wakeboarding, and just encouraging each other to live godly lives.
- We've had Bruce Linton join us as our Families Pastor and already the leaders and kids are having a tonne of fun learning about Jesus in creative ways.
- We've seen 3 couples married and 5 kids born to Christian parents.
- Over 85 people came together in May for Prayer & Praise, making it our largest ever night.
- We had over 80 people contribute to building a culture of hospitality in our church through our annual 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?'
- We smashed our target of \$15k, raising over \$17k for our missionaries during our Going Global month.

All these things show God at work in our church, but for me the highlight was baptising five guys in the church backyard right in the middle of winter.

We cannot do this without you

None of this is possible without your support. Don't forget we rely on your ongoing financial gifts to enable us to continue the work we are doing. There is no outside organisation that bank rolls us, nor are there direct-deposits coming from heaven. It's God's people using God's gifts to grow God's kingdom which is the way churches grow.

Can I encourage you to listen to a great message on generosity that you can find for free on our website here: vinechurch.com.au/resources/sermons/fully-engaged-in-paying-it-forward/.

Finally, please pray for the leadership here at Vine Church—for wisdom with decision-making and for God's continued blessing on us as a church as we seek to do his will and work in our local community and beyond.

For his glory,



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