

Living to be Disciples

1. Intro

- Over the next three weeks we're going to be doing a vision series here at church where we unfurl C@P vision for the next 5 years and the type of ministry we think C@P will be having into the future
- And quite frankly, it's pretty exciting!
- It's exciting to think where we've come from and what, under God, we've done the past five years ... and how we might build on that foundation for the years ahead

- Today I want to sketch out that vision for you all
- Then we're going to unpack it ... starting today and then some more over the next two weeks
- So that, God willing, you understand it, are captured by it and excited to get on board with it

- Acknowledge visitors ...

2. Looking to the past

- Before we look to the future ... I think it's important that we look to the past in order to see what God has done in and through C@P and celebrate those things
 - I remember being told once that you never achieve as much as you would like in one year at a church ... but you will often be surprised by what you achieved in the past five years
 - And I think that is true for C@P
 - Over the last five years, we haven't done everything we set out to do ... but we've certainly achieved a lot

- Numbers – Snapshot
- Members
 - 2012
 - 86 > 44 regular adults > 42 regular kids
 - 2017
 - 123 > 73 regular adults > 50 regular kids
 - Increase of 40%!
 - Last month we had our biggest regular Sunday attendance of 107
- Giving
 - 2012

- \$71k
- Giving per family / unit >\$55pw
- 2017
 - \$150k
 - Giving per family / unit >\$73pw
 - Massive!
- Shows
 - Generosity
 - Maturity
 - Hearts captured by the gospel
- Youth
 - 2 years ago outlined a strategy to leverage our connections with scripture by starting a junior youth group
 - Numbers
 - Started with about 8 church kids
 - 69 kids attended
 - Average 25 youth per week
 - This year high of 37
 - Connected with 86 parents
- One of our initiatives was to have a highly visible ministry to / within the PSPS community
 - This year launched Mainly Music > musical play group here in the hall on Monday mornings
 - Led by Joce, Simone, Jacqui, Col, Pam, Linda and other helpers who have done a fantastic job to kick start and run that ministry
 - Now have 15 families coming along regularly each week creating more opportunities to bless and connect with families in our community
- Welcoming
 - Three years ago we had no formal welcoming ministry
 - Now we have a Welcoming Team trained and equipped for this vital part of church and we've implemented systems for welcoming and integrating new comers
- Care Groups
 - This year we implemented Care Groups to pastorally care for one another and those who are new at church

- Its still in its infancy and needs to develop ... but I am seeing the fruit of that as people look out for, pray and catch up with one another to help spur one another on in their walk with Jesus
- Outreach
 - Parenting and marriage seminars > over 250 connections
 - Toys n Tucker > 800 connections `
- Conversions
 - Seen people come to faith in Jesus
 - Or come back to the Lord after walking away
- There are many good and wonderful things that we ought to celebrate and give thanks to God for that we have been able to achieve these past 5 years
- However, we also want to be looking forward and seeing how we can continue to bring glory to God in and through the ministry here at C@P
 - And that's what we're going to focus on today and the next two weeks

3. Looking to the future

- Earlier in the year ... the Steering Group (Lynne, Steve D, Adam, Janelle, Joce, Liana and myself) met to pray, prioritise and plan for the next five years in the life of C@P
- As part of that process we have re-shaped our vision and mission to be something that is memorable and simple
- Our Mission (why we exist)
 - At Church@thepeak we live to be and make disciples of Jesus [repeat]
- Our Vision (what we aim to be)
 - By God's grace, and for His glory, we will be a growing and maturing church who know, love, serve, and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
 - We want to see everyone in Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus
- We're going to unpack that in more detail
- But let me show you what we hope and pray that will look like over the next 5 years

- Our vision is to be ...
- A community of people who are so gripped by the grace of the gospel that you can almost see the transformation of people's lives happening right in front of you
- A church who are so joyful in what God has done for them in Christ they're constantly praying for and seeking opportunities to share that good news with their friends and the people of Peakhurst
- As the good news of Jesus is shared and people see the joy, contentment and transformation in the lives of those who share it with them ... they want to find out more and they come and visit Church@thepeak
- When they come on a Sunday, they're greeted by friendly faces who welcome them and connect with them and help them integrate into the life of church

- Imagine how amazing it would for C@P to begin standing on its own two feet ... become an independent church
 - To be financially independent and sufficiently big enough that we were able to leave the nest of Beverly Hills Anglican and begin our own independent journey
 - Friends that reality is not that far away

- Imagine how over the next 5 years ... our youth group continues to grow 10 kids a year so that in 5 years there are over 70 youth from Yr 6-12 attending each week
 - So large that we have to split it into Jnr youth and Snr youth groups
 - Our P/T youth pastor has developed a leadership pathway so that those in Yr 10-12 are being trained and equipped to be assistant leaders with the junior youth

- Imagine then what it would look like with a steady stream of senior high kids coming through youth group, being trained and equipped to disciple other youth
 - Those in Year 7 now will be about to finish year 12 which is a critical time for young Christians
 - But imagine those senior high kids being part of a senior high Bible study who are not only being discipled and prepared to live for Jesus post high school ... but are working together to launch a new service aimed at young adults

- Imagine what it might look like, that through the relationships and connections developed through Mainly Music start, that we start to see a steady trickle of MM families starting to visit us on Sundays and wanting to find out more about Christianity
- Or what it might look like when, because of the connections and outings we do with youth group parents ... some of them visit us at Christmas and Easter and others want to do our Life of Jesus course

- Imagine if we had a P/T mission pastor who's role it was to motivate, mobilize and mature us as a church so that we felt equipped and excited to sharing our faith and confident in inviting people to church all the time ... so we had 3-5 new people visiting every week

- Imagine what it might look like where people here at church were so gripped by the gospel ... they
 - Gave up work one day a week to teach scripture and tell kids about Jesus
 - Retired early because they wanted get more involved in the ministry life of church
 - Put their job on hold for two years to do a ministry training apprenticeship and explore whether full time ministry might be for them

- Imagine what would happen in our community if, under God, everyone in Peakhurst was able to hear the gospel and how transforming would that be?
- Exciting! Scary!
- Now it's going to talk baby steps
 - We're not planning to do all this in the next 6 months
 - We're praying it will over the next five years

Staffing

- To help us get there ... we need people to help us
- Very sad that Daniel and Hannah won't be part of the team next year
 - Daniel, Shannon and boys moving on to their next church as part of ordination training
 - Hannah moving to East Corrimal with the family later this month
 - Chance to farewell them on 17th Dec

- But I'm very grateful to God to answering our prayers for new leaders
- Joining us next year will be
 - Hayley Boag > Student Minister

- 3rd Yr Moore College
- Served at Uni Church UNSW, Narremburn / Cammeray and Glenquarie Anglican
- Hayley is super keen to join the youth team for next year

- John Delezio
 - I'm very excited that John Delezio will be joining the team next year as our part time 'mission pastor'
 - John has just finished MTS and studying an Ad Dip in Theology
 - John has a great heart for the gospel and seeing people come to know Jesus
 - John is going will be responsible for the mission life of C@P which includes helping to mature, motivate and mobilize us as a congregation engage in being disciple making disciples
 - The **great** blessing for us is that through the generosity of others and various grants ... John comes to us almost entirely self-funded
 - John will be with us 3 days a week as mission pastor
 - We're currently working with the principal here at PSPS to secure funding to appoint a part chaplain / student welfare officer
 - We're praying John will get that role which put him in a wonderful position to connect with and pastorally care for students, parents and staff here at PSPS

- Male Student Minister
 - I am also in discussion with an outstanding male student minister who I am hopeful will join us next year

- Mainly Music
 - Even though Jocelyn's Community Chaplaincy scholarship from ADM finishes this year, Joce has agreed to continuing to leading the Mainly Music team in 2018 as well as provide me with admin support that I am very thankful for

- Kids Church
 - Liana is stepping down from overseeing Kids Church next year in order to focus on Altitude Youth
 - I've asked Janelle Bryant to lead our Kids Church ministry next year
 - Janelle has been part of the team for years, she has a great heart to serve the families here at church > she loads of ideas and lots of energy
 - I'm looking forward to her stepping into that role next year

Four E's

- How are we going to do this?
- How are we going to ...
 - be and make disciples of Jesus
 - see everyone in Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus

- We're going to focus on Four E's
 - Establishing Christians – deepening spiritual maturity
 - Engaging the Community – connecting with unbelievers
 - Evangelising our Contacts – reaching the lost
 - Equipping Each Other - training and empowering members to exercise their gifts

- Over the next three weeks I want to unpack our mission and vision and explore what it will mean for us to buy into and live this out in personally and corporately as a church
- Today I want to focus on that first part of our mission – At Church@thepeak we live to BE disciples of Jesus

4. Looking to Jesus

- In Mark 8, Peter and the disciples have finally worked out that Jesus is the Christ > the promised Messiah of God
 - After hanging out with Jesus for over 2 years
 - They realise the evidence is clear
 - Jesus is the Christ

- However at this stage what they've failed to understand is what type of Christ Jesus will be
 - They expected a king who would overthrow the Romans and restore Israel¹
 - Now if the disciples had gone out at this point declaring Jesus as the Christ ... they would've been declaring the wrong Christ
 - So Jesus has to teach them what it means for him to be the Christ
- He does that immediately in v31

¹*Psalms of Solomon, 17* – "Behold, O Lord, and raise up for them a king, the son of David ... and gird him with strength, that he might shatter unrighteous rulers, and purge Jerusalem from nations that trample her down to destruction ... He shall have the heathen nations serve him under his yoke." and *Palestinian Targum, Genesis 49:10* – "How beautiful is the king, the Messiah, who will arise from those who are the house of Judah! He girds up his loins and goes forth and orders the battle array against his enemies and slays the kings along with their overlords, and no king or overlord can stand before him; he reddens the mountains with the blood of their slain, his clothing is dipped in blood like a winepress."

- *He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.*
- You see, Jesus needed to teach the disciples they have to abandon **their** idea of the Christ ... and understand that instead of conquest and power and greatness ... that as the Christ ... Jesus must suffer and die

- Notice Jesus says he **must** suffer and die
- As he will explain in 10:45 ... Jesus has come to die as a ransom for many
 - He must die in order to pay the ransom price for sin
 - Unless he dies, you and I ... and rest of the world would otherwise be left to face God's judgment for our sin on our own
 - And friends you don't want to get to judgment day and be standing before Lord with your sins unpunished
 - It is a frightening thought to come before the Lord with only you sins between you
 - If forgiveness for sin is to be made possible ... Jesus **must** die

- Once Jesus has made it clear that he's the Christ who must die, he then begins to lay down what it means to follow him?
 - What does it mean to be a disciple of this Christ?

- ***Illustration – Following on Social Media***
- The recent phenomenon of social media has dramatically changed communication and networking
 - The big shift is being able to instantly know what is happening in the lives of all the people you are friends with or follow
 - All you have to do log in ... find the friend or celebrity you're interested in ... and click 'follow' and you'll automatically start receiving all their photos, status updates, messages, and tweets

- You'll know exactly where they are > what they're doing > who they're with and they're be a photo to prove it
 - You can follow anyone ... Justin Beiber > Katie Perry > Donald Trump > Dalai Lama

- KP has 94.5 mil followers on Twitter
- But what does KP expect of her millions of followers?
 - Nothing!

- They can follow her every move > see where she's performing > what pearls of wisdom she has for all her fans
- But they're completely passive > they don't have to do anything

- In complete contrast ... Jesus says in v34 *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*
- Here Jesus says ...
 - if you want to be part of God's kingdom ...
 - if you want to share in the blessing of the ransom price I'm going to pay
 - then you **'must** deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me'

- ***Deny yourself***
- Being a disciple of Jesus means you must deny yourself
 - Life is no longer centered around your priorities and desires
 - Instead you start living life with Jesus at the centre
 - We shift from doing our will to doing Jesus' will
 - He dictates the drum beat of life that we march to ... not us

- ***Take up your cross***
- If that's not radical enough, Jesus also says ... *you must take up your cross*
 - This has nothing to do with the little burdens of life we experience
 - You might hear people say ... 'we all have our cross to bear!'
 - Maybe because they have a snoring husband or annoying work colleague

- But this is not what Jesus is talking about and it's not what the disciples and the crowd would have understood Jesus to mean either
 - In that time the image of someone taking up their cross ... is the image of a condemned man carrying his own cross beam to his crucifixion ... just as Jesus would soon do as part of his mission
- What Jesus means ... that in following him we must go through a death like experience as we hand over our life to him
 - In following Jesus, we effectively die to self

- ***Follow Jesus***
- Finally disciples of Jesus are to follow him
 - Listen to him
 - Obey him
 - Hear his call on your life

- You see ... following Jesus is far from passive
 - It's not like following KP on Twitter
 - Following Jesus is full on > active > boots and all
 - And Jesus lays in on the line right from the start

- **Application**
- First thing to note here is that
 - if you and I are going to live to be a disciple of Jesus...
 - this is what it's going to take
 - Live for Jesus > die to self > follow the saviour

- You can't say ...
 - I want to have a comfy life and put Jesus on the side
 - I want to get married and have kids and I'll have a bit of Jesus too
 - I want to be financially secure and then I'll take Jesus seriously

- To live to be a disciple of Jesus ... means you have to be prepared for your world to be turned upside down
 - Because the gospel affects **everything!**
- It affects your
 - Life goals
 - Finances
 - Sexual desires
 - Career
 - How you use your time
 - Your attitude to work / school
 - Ambitions

- Many of us find it hard to allow the gospel to sink in deep and transform our hearts and lives in these areas
- Many of us struggle with temptation and heart idols and sin that hold us back being a faithful disciple of Jesus
 - Greed
 - Anger
 - Drinking
 - Porn
 - Careerism
- We struggle to deny self and follow Jesus > to be wholehearted disciples of Christ

Establishing Christians

- This is why one of our strategic areas of focus is Establishing Christians
- We want to see people not just come to know and trust Jesus
 - We want to see everyone at C@P deepen their spiritual maturity
 - We want to people to grow and maturing in their faith and becoming more and more like Jesus

- How?
- Focus on the gospel
- We allow the HS to apply God's gospel to our hearts so
 - they might be transformed
 - our idols dismantled
 - temptations taken away
 - so that we would live to be disciples of Jesus who are willing to
 - live for Jesus > die to self > follow the saviour

- It might sound simplistic ... but it's crucial that we focus on this
- Unless you get the gospel and, and believe it and constantly remind yourself of it ...
 - you won't change
 - you won't grow
 - you won't mature

- Spiritual transformation, spiritual maturity, spiritual growth comes as we soak ourselves in the gospel
 - And to do that we need to be deeply entrenched in the word of God

- Research done by the Centre for Bible Engagement in the USA shows that when a person engages with the Bible four or more times a week their odds of
 - Drinking to excess reduces 62%
 - Viewing pornography goes down 59%
 - Gambling down 45%
 - Lashing out in anger reduces 31%
 - Gossiping reduces 28%
 - Lying reduces 28%
 - Neglecting family reduces 26%

- So if you go to church, GG and read Bible regularly each week ... you're going to be growing, maturing, disciple of Jesus

- It's not rocket surgery! 😊 Simple stuff!
- In addition, research from CMD here in Sydney shows that for Christians who are growing in their faith ... they're way more likely to
 - Share their faith
 - Invite someone to church
 - Be generous with their money
- Centre for Bible Engagement showed similar results
- The person who engaged in the Bible was much more likely to
 - Giving financially to a church +416%
 - Memorizing scripture +407%
 - Discipling others +231%
 - Sharing their faith with others +228%
 - Giving financially to causes other than their church +218%
- The results from when we did the NCLS last year showed that
 - 32% of us said we spend in devotional activity almost daily
 - Our aim over the next five years is to increase that to 60%
 - 58% of us are regular attending a growth group
 - Our aim is to increase that to 80%
- It's critical we help one another deepen our spiritual maturity and become Established as Christians ... if we're going to be a healthy, God honouring church that lives to be and make disciples of Jesus
- Three things I am going to be constantly urging you to do over the next five years
 - Being committed to Sunday church and sitting under the word of God each week
 - Being committed to being a regular member of a GG
 - Being committed to some form of regular devotional each day > bible reading, listening to sermons, praying
- We want to help enable that by
 - Being the best preachers we can be
 - Having as many GG as possible to enable to you to attend one, and equipping those GG leaders to be the best they can be
 - Providing you with the resources, devotions, apps to aid your quiet times

- There's one other thing we want work on to help Establish Christians and deepen spiritual maturity
- Again, it flows out of the NCLS that showed
 - The number of our kids (15+ and still living at home) attending church is only 54%
 - We want to see that increase to 70% by 2022
- We understand that it takes a village to raise a child ... and church is part that village
 - Our plans to grow youth group over the next 5 years will help with that
 - But we also want to
 - develop a discipleship pathway for teens and young adults to help them continue growing and living as disciples of Jesus through their senior high years and into adulthood
 - Appoint a P/T youth pastor who can lead this vital ministry
 - Start growth groups and care groups for our senior high and young adults

5. Conclusion

- That's part 1 of 3
- I hope you're excited for 2018 and the next five years here at C@P
- God has placed us here in this church family to bring glory to him
- As a church we'll do that as we live to **be** and **make** disciples of Jesus
- Our vision is ...
 - To be a growing and maturing church who know, love, serve, and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
 - To see everyone in Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus
- We going to do that by
 - Establishing Christians
 - Engaging the Community
 - Evangelising our Contacts
 - Equipping Each Other
- Friends, I believe we're about to start a new phase of ministry life here at C@P > an exciting phase
- A phase where
 - we stand on our own two feet and become independent
 - we expand our ministry to youth and young adults

- we deepen our reach into the local and school community
- we bring the life transforming news of the gospel to people

- As we head into the next five years, I want to ask you join with me in praying for, buying into and being committed to this vision

PRAY