



WEEKLY NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
DAPTO ANGLICAN CHURCH

CHURCH HEALTH AND ILLNESS

REV. DAVID RIETVELD

I heard a striking comment this week. Dr Peter Steinke, in his book *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*, says that church health and illness are not opposites – they are complements.

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Just let that sink in. We live in a time where we believe we have a right to avoid negativity. We parent by intentionally exposing our children to positive messages and shielding them from negative ones. We imagine health and sickness are opposites and believe we can have the good without the bad.

Not so, says Steinke. "Health and illness are compliments. We need to be ill in order to be healthy." A vaccine exposes your body to a small, weak amount of a negative virus, creating a mini-illness. But this illness awakens your system to create T and B cells that will combat this foreign agent in the future. Churches function like this, according to Steinke. Mini illnesses create resilience and the resources to combat future and greater undesirable influences.

If he is right, this is a telling observation. According to Andrew Root in *The Pastor in a Secular Age*, our historical context has created an expectation where congregation members imagine, and some churches even promise, that the church's role is to add value to your life by adding Jesus. The consumerist worldview makes the pastor and church something of a provider of religious goods and services that will improve your life. If this church is not a net blessing to your life, then parishioners may vote with their feet and attend elsewhere, or attend less and less, and after a while, perhaps not at all.

Root tells us congregation members come less if church does not look and make us feel healthier, and Steinke tells us that in order to be healthy, a church will, in some seasons, experience illness.

cont...

What rang true about Steinke's comment was its balance. Steinke 'diagonalises' health and illness. Some preach the so-called 'prosperity gospel', emphasising the blessing and riches of the kingdom of God. Others regularly find another refrain – that Jesus invites us to take up our cross, to serve and sacrifice. Tim Keller labels this the stoic gospel. Neither alone represents a balanced view of life inside the church or the kingdom of God. As Paul puts it, "suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Rom 5:3-4)

The next time your church experiences illness or you hear of attendance decline in the Western church, I invite you to reframe it. Might God be allowing a mini-illness that will awaken the church to resilience and greater health in the future? Might God be using death to bring life? No, to bring a new Yes? Do you trust Jesus is building his church in such a way that gates of Hades will not overcome it? (c.f. Matt 16:18)



NEXT STEPS

Rhythms and Reboots were the primary tones for our Next Steps in 2024 as we focus on growing disciples. On Tuesday night, over 140 of us came together for our annual Next Steps Dinner.

The children enjoyed dinner and activities in the hall, decorated with balloons and decor in the DAC triangle colours. Adults from our five services mingled, met new friends, and enjoyed dinner. What a fantastic sight and a wonderful opportunity for cross-service integration.

The more formal aspect of the night took us into the auditorium as we reflected on 2023 with Matt and Linda before David helped us imagine what we can look forward to in 2024; Nathan also shared some updates to Youth Ministry for next year. We prayed and shared our thoughts over dessert to end the night.

If you missed out on the Next Steps booklet, please check your email or download a copy [here](#).



Brightening Christmas for Children in need

This Christmas help St Luke's Preschool and Dapto Anglican Church give a special gift to those children who miss out on Christmas. Getting alongside Anglicare, the Preschool has set up a Christmas Tree in the Foyer. We are inviting families to bring a NEW unwrapped toy to place under the tree. These gifts will be used to bless our broader community.

If you would like to contribute bring in your gift by Friday 8th of December.



Working & Cleaning Bee

Friday Nov 10th 10am till 2pm **&** **Saturday Nov 11th** 9am till 12pm

Please join us on Friday and Saturday next week for our working and cleaning bee at the Ministry Centre. We'll be working in all areas of the church, cleaning, repairing and maintaining our property.

We'll have lists to work from and supplies. If you'd be happy to bring along extra vacuums or tools, that would help too.



Safe Ministry

Dapto Anglican Church is committed to Safe Ministry Practices. If you have a question or concern, we are here to help.

Please contact:

- Julie Houghton, Parish Safe Ministry Representative, by confidential email safeministry@daptoanglican.org.au or through our church office on 42611001
- Anglican Abuse Report line on 1800 774945



PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Renew us, O Lord our God;
renew our faith in your purpose for mankind;
renew our obedience to your commands;
renew our commitment to the mission of your Church;
renew our love, our hope and our joy
in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY

MOURNING

Continue to pray for the family of Sandy B, who recently passed away.

EXPECTANT PARENTS

Tara and Nathan O; Lisa and Matt G.

VILLAGES/NURSING HOMES

Please continue to pray for our people in Residential Care Homes: Jean W, Kath H, Phyllis D, Audrey & Alan R, Gae & Allen Q, Elsie N, Barbara L, Pamela B, Gordon M, Beth W, Betty B (Piper House, Dapto); Robyn K (Digger's Rest, Corrimal); Helen S (Marco Polo, Unanderra); Ella H, Trevor W (Warrigal Care, A.P.); Wendye C (Farmborough Uniting, Unanderra); Cheryl T (Hammond Care, Horsley); Graham S (The Links, Wollongong); Brian B (William Beach Gardens, Dapto).

8AM / WED 2PM

Please continue to pray for Jim B, Phil W, and Wal S as they all continue to recover from recent surgeries.

10AM

Please continue to pray for Michael V, Trish G, and Shaina's son, Roman, as they all recover from recent surgeries; Also continue to pray for Pat McK's friend, Jan J, as she has to have more intensive treatment of radiation and chemo; Also please continue to pray for Andrew W, Phillip P, and Janice S, as they all have health issues.

CAFE CHURCH/CREATIVE CONNECTION

Please continue to pray for Lynne N's brother, Stephen, that his Targeted Chemo works on his Melanoma. Also, keep praying for Lynne N as she goes through the protocols for new new medication for her Crohns, and that the Squamous Cell treatment on her ear works well.