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# CHURCH PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Today I have some very exciting news to I'd like to share with you

Our mission at C@P is we live to be and make disciples of Jesus - that's what we are on about

Our vision ... what we hope to see ... is all of Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus

That's what we have been on about since we started C@P back in 2008 with just 12 adults and 15 kids

We didn't know back then if it would work, and there were years when we wondered whether or not C@P even was viable in the long term

But by God's grace, and with the support of Beverly Hills and our partnership with them, slowly we have grown

And our church of 27 grew to become a church of 70, then 100, then 150

In that time, we have seen people

- converted
- come back to God after years of wandering
- mature in their faith and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus

And as we continued to grow, in 2018 we able to become our own parish, independent of Beverly Hills

And in recent years we've continued to grow to the point where

- our morning church was so full we needed to start second service
- youth group needed to move from the little church in Whitegates Ave back here to the hall

To the point where we now have nearly 200 ppl who call C@P their church, and over 30 kids who call Altitude their youth group

We are thankful to God for all that

He has sustained us, provided for us, equipped us, and blessed us with all that

He deserves all the glory

But the fact remains that 1000's of people in Peakhurst, Mortdale, Oatley, and Lugarno still don't know Jesus

And while ever there remains people in our suburbs who are lost and perishing, the question we always need to ask ourselves is ... what can we do, under God, to be and make more and more disciples of Jesus?

Well friends, I believe God has brought before us an opportunity to help enable us to do that in very significant way, which I am super excited to share with you today.

Over the course of the last six months, myself and more recently our wardens have been talking with the wardens at Christ Church Mortdale about the possibility of a strategic partnership, whereby we can partner together to better reach Peakhurst and Mortdale with the gospel.

After presenting this idea in detail to our respective Parish Councils last week, both churches have agreed to enter into a one-year ministry partnership where we bring together our respective resources and strengths so that we can be more effective in reaching people in our community with good news of Jesus.

What this means in practice is:

- Because CCM is currently without a Senior Minister, I will become the Acting Rector of CCM, whilst remaining Snr Pastor here at C@P
- I will therefore oversee the ministry of both churches as we seek as much as possible to partner together in ministry and will split my time between both sites
- Our hope is that over the course of the next 12 months ... our partnership proves to be fruitful and effective ... and if that is the case, then we would look to formally merge our two churches

This is super exciting ... because we have two churches ... who both have strengths and ways they can contribute to making us mission better together

C@P

- Growing church
- Strong presence in local community, esp. here at PSPS
- Thriving Kids Church programme
- Growing ministry to Y&YA
- Mission heart for Peakhurst

CCM

- Faithful and capable staff and lay leaders
- Three unique Sunday services
- Fantastic church building with a huge worship space, hall, rooms, and office space
- Great location in the heart of Mortdale
- Real heart to reach the lost of Mortdale with the gospel

Can you imagine, how good it would be as two groups of faithful, committed follower of Jesus to combine those unique resources and strengths so that we can **mission better together?**

As we look at our relative strengths, it is clear there are many good reasons for us to be partnering with CCM in gospel ministry

- C@P currently has good ministry momentum, and should we keep growing at the current rate our morning service will be full within the next two years
  - CCM on the other hand has seen ministry momentum slow in recent years and has considerable capacity for growth
  - C@P is therefore in the position to offer CCM resources to more effectively reach Mortdale with the gospel
- Here at C@P, Night Church and Youth Group are both viable and healthy ministries, however their potential effectiveness and impact is limited by virtue of meeting here in the hall, and especially when it is dark and cold during the winter months
  - CCM on the other hand other hand has one of the best ministry centres in the region that is underutilised which is a much more functional and inviting environment to welcome newcomers to both these ministries
- Here at C@P we have a small staff team, as does CCM
  - Partnering together means we will have a bigger and more diverse ministry and administrative team better able to serve both churches

Throughout our discussions we considered various options as to what 'partnership' may look like between our two churches

For the next 12 months, this is what we envisage our partnership looking like

### **Morning Church**

- We think that it is strategically better for the gospel long term to have a ministry presence in **both** Peakhurst **and** Mortdale, particularly because of C@P's presence at here at PSPS
- Therefore, the morning services at both CCM and C@P will continue meeting at their current times and locations
- However, my prayer is that 10 people (or 5 families) from C@P would offer themselves to help re-new ministry momentum at CCM
- In addition, we would also like to help support CCM in their music and kids church ministry
- We haven't worked out all the details yet, but that's our prayer and desire

### **Night Church**

- When it comes to Night Church and Youth Group, we believe there is strategic benefit in bringing these ministries together at Mortdale
- That is combining our two Night Services, and combining our two youth groups to give them critical mass and make them even more inviting for newcomers
- The timing of when that will take place is yet to be determined, but it is hoped that this will take place before the years end

### **Staff**

- When it comes to staff, the staff will work together as one team from the Mortdale office, with Stu, Dan, John, and Alan Wood (Asst Min at CCM) preaching the same preaching programme across both sites

Imagine in five years time ...

- Youth group has doubled in size, and is drawing kids from not just from PSPS, Marist, and Peaky High, but also from Mortdale PS, PWPS, and Penshurst Girls HS
- Night Church is an intergenerational service of more than 80 people from high schoolers to empty nesters ... and is getting to the point where we need to put on a creche for those young couples having children
- Seeing a steady stream of non-church youth kids coming to Night Church, getting converted, and being baptised into Christ
- Running women's and men's Bible studies in the hall at Mortdale where we all come and fellowship together each week over supper before splitting off into our respective Bible study groups
- Having a dedicated creche room packed with kids while our young mums meet for Bible study on Tues / Wed mornings
- Two thriving morning services in both Peakhurst and Mortdale, that are both growing, missioning together in the gospel and seeing new people constantly being welcomed and introduced to Jesus
- That we look back at our partnership together and see that  $1+1$  didn't just = 2 ...  $1+1 = 3, 5, \text{ or } 10$

Obviously, there will be a cost to this

- We will miss those who choose to go to CCM
- It will be complex and tricky to implement
- Both CCM and C@P is going to get used to not having a full-time rector around every Sunday

But what does the Bible say?

- When Jesus calls us to follow him , he doesn't call us to a life of comfort or ease
- He says, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me

If we really want to see all of Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus ... then this is something worth denying ourselves for, isn't it?

As the wardens and I of both churches have met, discussed, debated, and prayed about this possible partnership, we are convinced that under God, we will mission better together. That is, as we partner together in ministry, we believe we will be much more effective in growing our churches and reaching people in Peakhurst and Mortdale with the gospel, than if we stayed apart.

As an aside, we can take confidence that this form of ministry partnership between two churches is becoming increasingly common. Two years ago, St Matthews West Pymble and All Saint's West Lindfield partnered together in ministry before merging. That partnership has been very successful, and we have learned much from their experience. A similar partnership and merger has also been successful between Neutral Bay Anglican and Church by the Bridge.

### **Timing**

Now when is all this going to happen?

- Announcing this at both churches today (ask if you know ppl at Night Church, hold off telling them today so they can hear it for themselves tonight)
- Plan is to formally commence our partnership as of 31 Oct
- Gives two months to plan and get things ready
- Have a year partnering together ... getting feedback, assessing how we are going, tweaking things along the way
- With the view to making a decision about whether or not to formally merge our two churches together Nov next year

### **Acknowledge Change**

- We know this will come as a shock to most of you and that you are going to need time to digest and process this
- I also know that there will be a real spectrum of responses to this proposal
  - Some will be freaking out
  - Some will be chomping at the bit and ready to go next week
  - Most of you will be somewhere in between
- That's normal when we experience change
- To help you work through and understand this change ...
  - Email out tonight > MOU and FAQs
  - Warden or Staff member visiting GG's this week to answer any questions you might have
  - Open Q&A next Sunday after church at 12pm

### **Conclusion**

As we come together, my prayer is that will be united in our partnership

- One God
- One Mission
- One Team ... as we seek to see all of Peakhurst and beyond transformed by the good news of Jesus

### **Pray**