

A week in the life of a Bethlehem Pastor

In this edition of *News for the pews* I'd like to do something a bit different, and share with you what a 'normal' week can look like in the life of a pastor here at Bethlehem. I do this because it can be a bit of a mystery to many lay people what we get up to between Sunday and Sunday! This will also give you an insight into how Pastor Fraser and I structure our team ministry here at Bethlehem. Like many professions, there really is no 'normal week', but here it goes...

Monday - Pastor Fraser and I both take Mondays as our regular day off. This is quite common for pastors as it gives a natural break after the responsibilities of Sunday. Occasionally there may be some pressing pastoral need to which we are called, but generally we try to relax and unwind on Mondays. For example, you may find me riding somewhere through the Adelaide hills on my mountain bike, having lunch out with my wife Kimberley and little pre-schooler Anastasia, or catching up on jobs around home.

Tuesday - On Tuesday morning our new week begins. We tend to arrive early and get straight into preparations for the coming Sunday, be that studying the Bible texts in preparation for preaching, or selecting service orders, hymns and songs. Morning prayer is at 9:30am each day, where we gather in the church to commend the day and week ahead to God, and to pray for the needs of our congregation. At 10:00am on Tuesdays we have a staff meeting with the two pastors, Lisa our youth and young adult's coordinator, and Amy who works in the office Monday-Wednesday. We usually begin with Bible study, go through the Bethlehem diary for the fortnight, and discuss any other staff-related matters. Over Tuesday lunchtime one of the pastors leads a group in Bethlehem house through a Bible study on one of the readings for the coming Sunday. This also greatly helps in our sermon preparation. In the afternoon, we might have someone booked in to see us for an appointment, or make some visits to members in hospital or in their home. Once a month the city Lutheran pastor's fraternal meets at Bethlehem as well. We head home for dinner, but then on Tuesday night there may be a meeting of the Sanctuary Guild or Pastoral assistants.

Wednesday - On Wednesday morning we'll again gather for morning prayer. Every second Wednesday the mums and kid's group meets in Bethlehem house, and one of the pastors leads a Bible study for them. Late on a Wednesday morning you may find Pastor Fraser and I going for a walk down the street together, as we are in the habit of doing. As well as enabling us to get us fresh air, this also functions as something of an informal meeting for us as we talk over various pastoral issues in the life of the congregation. Over Wednesday lunch time one of the pastors is available for private confession and absolution in the church (12:45-1:45pm), while the other one often heads out to the Waite Campus of Uni SA to lead a Bible study with a few of the Christian staff there. Wednesday afternoon once a month we have a Holy Communion service here at Bethlehem followed by afternoon tea. Otherwise we may do some more reading and study, make some phone calls and catch up on emails, or make another pastoral visit or two on our way home. On Wednesday evenings at Bethlehem there tends not to be formal meetings because choir practice is on, and so the evening could be free for us, or an opportunity to meet with people for some other pastoral appointment such as marriage or baptism preparation.

Thursday - Thursday tends to be a day for us here where there's not as many formal commitments. We may be doing some more readings and studying toward our preaching for Sunday. If we know we have a busy Friday coming up we may try to write our sermon that morning too. Once a month the Bethlehem Ladies guild meets on Thursday from late morning, over lunch, and into the

afternoon. One of the pastors usually leads a Bible study there. The inner city ecumenical pastor's fraternal also meets here at Bethlehem monthly on a Thursday afternoon. Other than this, we may find ourselves with someone who drops in unexpectedly for pastoral conversation and prayer, or take Holy Communion to some of our people who are home-bound. On Thursday evening, there may be a meeting, or Pastor Fraser leads a classical Latin group, followed by a young adult's Bible study and discussion group.

Friday - On Friday morning, we'll often be focused on final preparations for Sunday services. One of us may be preparing our sermon, while the other is attending to details of worship for the Sunday and checking over the bulletin with Elizabeth in the office. In the early afternoon of Friday we try to set aside an hour each week to keep up our skills in Greek for reading the Bible, and are often joined by some other pastors or seminary students. During term time we have Confirmation lessons from 4:15-5:15pm on Fridays and the two pastors alternate in taking those lessons, very capably assisted by Lisa Thiele.

Saturday - Most pastors understand Saturday as a work day, but in a more flexible sense. We do not generally come into the office on Saturdays. There may be a pastoral appointment, a men's breakfast, or a wedding, or some last-minute preparations for Sunday. Sometimes it's completely free and we'll be relaxing with our families, or in winter you may even catch us at the footy!

Sunday – On Sundays you have a much better idea of what we're doing! We're usually in early to prepare for services. As a general rule, Pastor Fraser and I have had the practice of serving together at all three services each Sunday: 9:00am, 11:00am and 7:00pm. We find our team ministry together flows from this shared worship leadership, and it is also beneficial to developing and maintaining pastoral relationships in the congregation to be at all three services. We take it in turns as to who preaches the sermon and who leads the liturgy. Sometimes there is a lunch after church where we enjoy spending social time with church members. At other times, there could be a visit we do as well. But otherwise it's home in the afternoon to have lunch with our families, and perhaps a little rest before the evening service. Pastor Fraser has also offered Bible studies on 5:45pm Sunday evenings for parts of the year.

There are of course, many other permutations and combinations. A week can look very different, for example, if we have a funeral. And although there is plenty happening at Bethlehem, we try not to overschedule things, so that we can leave room for people to make appointments or call, or to drop in and talk. It's a real joy to serve as a pastor here at Bethlehem, and I hope this gives you a little bit more of a picture of what we do between Sunday and Sunday.

God bless you, Pastor Joshua Pfeiffer