



Aflame Community Times

ACTS 09



Issue 2009

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- + Mario
- + Claresta

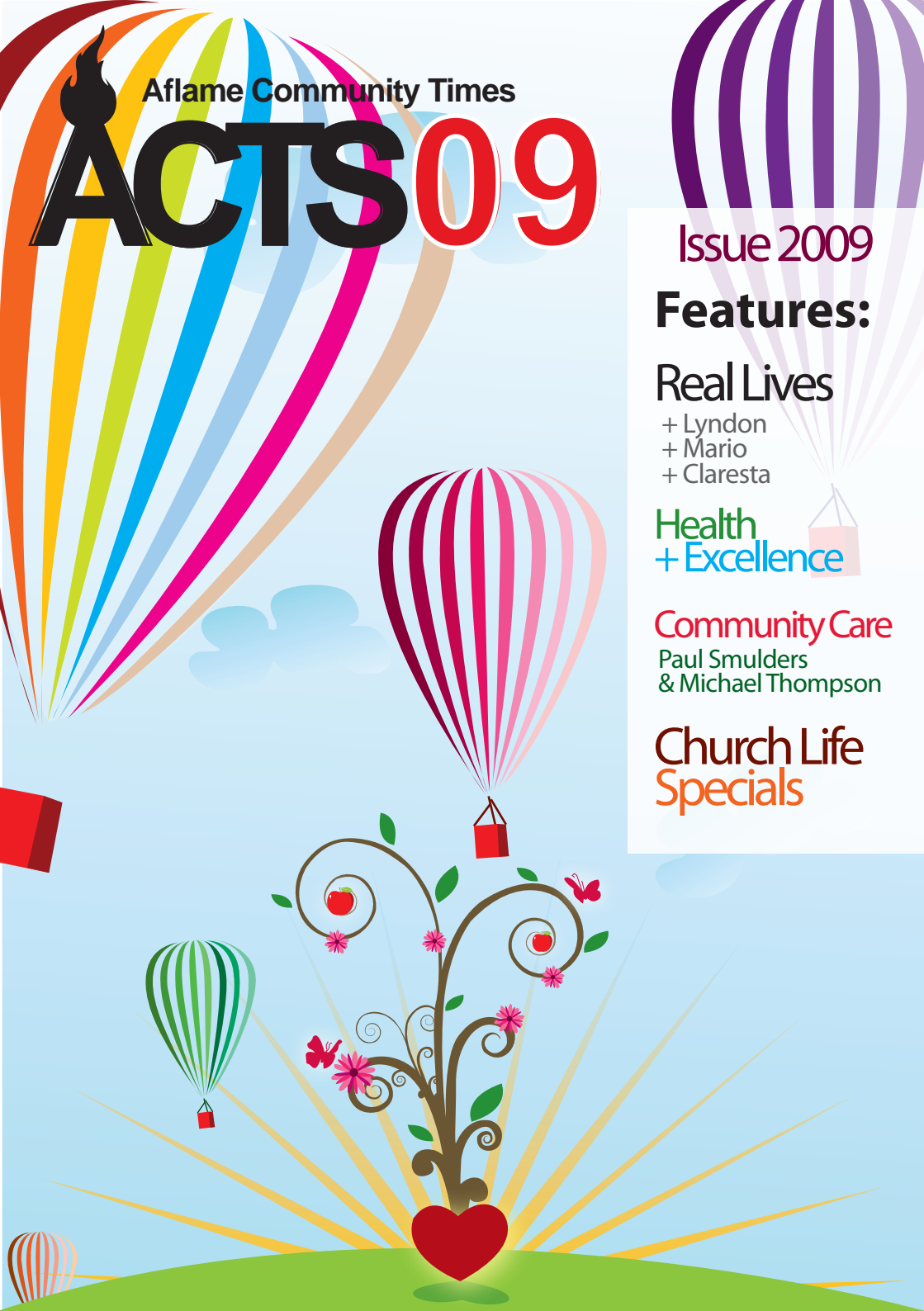
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From the ACTS09 Team

Hello! This is it. The official 2009 edition of ACTS09. We hope you are blessed by it.

This year, we've changed our focus to just PEOPLE. There are so many untold miraculous and inspiring stories of just how JESUS CHRIST is changing the lives of everyday people in the Church Family and Community. So this year we are sharing "just some" of these stories and their experiences. Indeed, GOD is doing much more than we can ever ask, think or imagine!

Reaching our 13th year as a Church, we'd like to extend huge thanks and appreciation to our Pastors Jimmy and Evelin Goh for their love, impartation and investment into our lives. No words can truly express how thankful to GOD we are to have such loving Pastors.

As we move further towards the close of 2009 and onto the next year, we look forward and are excited in seeing what other "stories" will begin to unfold. GOD is the ultimate story writer. History is "His Story." Let Him write yours! =)

God Bless You,
ACTS09 Team.



Family from left to right: Nick, Buntaran, Claresta and Wayne.



Claresta Varinata

Loving wife and mother of two



'Teenage girl fights for life after party bashing,' 'Concern growing over drug abuse by youth,' 'Australia's teen suicide rate highest in the world,' 'Bullying in Aust schools among worst in world: survey.' Its news headlines like these that raise concerns in the hearts of most, if not all parents in our society today.

Claresta Varinata, along with her sons Wayne (15) and Nicholas (13), have been members of Aflame for about 2 years. Claresta's husband, who works overseas, also attends the Sunday services when he is in Perth.

Claresta had previously been attending her former Church, but found there was little focus on building the youth there. Her sons were both studying in Uniting Church schools and had been attending Church services with her every Sunday but she said, *'...their schools did not have much teaching from the Bible... and the weekly Sunday messages in Church were not enough to build them. It just*

Although Aflame Community Church is predominantly made up of young adults, there is also a strong focus on building the lives of the children, youth and families.

This is a Media Publication of Aflame Community Church



Sunday Celebration

10am Every Sunday @ Cana House
Piccadilly Square, 5 Aberdeen St
Perth. Western Australia

Visit us on the web @ www.aflamecomchurch.org

came to a point where I started to feel the need for them to hear more about the Word of God.'

With her husband based in Indonesia for work, the routine of everyday life in Perth also started to make her question God's purpose in her own life. She said, 'I questioned myself: what is God's will for my life, what is His purpose for me?' These two factors made her search for more.

Claresta had known Pastors Jimmy and Evelin Goh since 1997. She was familiar with them, their Church background and their passion for youth ministry, and said, '... Ps Jimmy is well known to the people I know, as a righteous man who is strict with children, and effective in disciplining and building them up in the way of God.' With this in mind, she decided to start attending Aflame with her sons.

Since being planted in Aflame, Claresta said, 'this Church really educates us with the solid Word of God every week and it has helped me find a lot of answers that I had previously questioned. We are taught not only the Word of God as head knowledge, but also taught how to apply it in everyday life and in raising our children so that they may also grow in godliness and in discovering their purpose in life.'

Claresta has been attending the weekly Ladies' Fellowship and she said she's been so encouraged and strengthened by the other ladies in the group. 'Not only do we praise God and give thanks to Him, but we also revise the previous Sunday's sermon to discuss how to apply it. We support and strengthen each other in areas and times of weakness and also pray together for personal needs and for Aflame as a whole. I am the youngest in the Ladies' Fellowship, and I am blessed by the other more senior members - by their faith and love for their families. It's very encouraging!'

Wayne and Nicholas also attend the

youth Life Group, known as JAG, (Jesus Aflame Generation) during the week. Their mother shared, 'I notice every time they have Life Group, they come back with calmness and peace. What they learn from Life Group equips them with the teaching from the Bible, and gives them the wisdom and discernment to know what is good and what is not. This is important so that they know how to make the right decisions and choosing the right friends. It also gives me the peace of mind to know my sons are with people who honour and love God.'



Claresta with husband Buntaran

Claresta looks forward to a bright future with this Church in shining out for God's glory to a lost and dying world – relating God's love and grace to people from every walk of life so that as many will come to know Jesus and be impacted, just as she and her family have been. Claresta shares, 'God is just like a parent who is always waiting for you to come to Him. Just think back to all the good and fortunate things that have happened in your life and know, that's the grace of God upon you – the grace of God, not gods, the grace of the true God – Jesus Christ. I encourage you not to close yourself up, but to open up to Him today.' ■

Mario Reza Satrio

Graduate Engineer

"I smoked about one to two packs of cigarettes per day."



Mario and Cindy

Hello everybody, my name is Mario. In 2002, I came to Australia from Jakarta to study at Curtin. I'm now 28.

I had been brought up as a Catholic since young, and as a boy recalled praying regularly to GOD, although my faith wasn't strong. As I was growing older, I began hanging around the wrong crowd of friends and no longer viewed GOD as necessary in my life.

Around this time, I would say my lifestyle became very selfish, only really thinking about myself and eventually getting myself involved in smoking and marijuana. I smoked about one to two packs of cigarettes per day.

As life went on, a friend brought me to a Church and I began to feel GOD wanting to call me back into relationship with Him. However, I resisted and still wanted to remain living in my own ways.

A turning point in my life happened when I was 25 years old. My father and a best friend, who meant a lot to me, passed away within a week of each other. This affected me emotionally, but at the same time was a huge wake up call for me. At that moment I knew I had no control over my life and that I had better come back to GOD.

I began attending a Church every Sunday for 3 years, but still continued smoking and led the same unfulfilling lifestyle. One night, when I was having dinner with my girlfriend Cindy and her Life Group leader, Marini, I was encouraged to attend

Aflame Community Church. Inside I felt very uncomfortable about it, due to feeling somewhat guilty about my past and current lifestyle. However, I started to pray and seek GOD and felt the right decision was for me to grow in Aflame.

The first Sunday I attended Aflame, it was such a different feeling. I felt such peace and felt happy. I literally experienced the love of GOD. I then became a part of a young adult Life Group and I can honestly say it is like a family. It's not just a once a week meet and that's it, but truly something special where I can find support, encouragement and learn to grow closer to GOD.

Although I had come back to a relationship with GOD, and had given up smoking, there were still struggles of cravings for smoking and other wrong desires. In January this year, I made the decision to be water baptized.

After coming out of the water, I felt so light and free. My cravings and wrong desires, as well as feelings of condemnation were totally gone! I felt so free, all thanks to JESUS!

To end, I just want to say that all in all, I've found it's a process and not something that can usually happen overnight. However, never give up on GOD, HE is the One that helps you. HE never fails, on my own strength I tried but failed, but with GOD nothing is impossible. Seek after Him and you'll overcome. ■

Lyndon Win

The IT Man

Hi, my name is Lyndon and I came from a very strong Buddhist background.

I came as an overseas student 13 years ago to study. While I was studying, I worked to pay off my school fees and living expenses. All along in my life, as far as I can remember, I was never happy.

I always felt that there was an emptiness in my heart. So I would always try to find fulfillment and happiness by going out to night clubs, partying and hanging around with the wrong crowd. While I was studying and working, I met my good friend Benny Suwarno. We both were working at a place called Hayashi. Long after we left from that place, I finished my studies and gained my permanent residency and began working full time.

I would always try to find fulfillment and happiness by going out to night clubs, partying and hanging around with the wrong crowd.

Life would go as normal, but deep down I still felt emptiness inside and was still looking for answers to overcome that emptiness. Two years ago, I reached a point where I was so broken down with a broken heart and felt like life was not going anywhere. Then one day, Benny prayed for me after work and I felt that something had stirred me up in my heart, which prompted me to go to Church.

On the first Sunday I attended Aflame Community Church, Pastor Jimmy encouraged us to come to the front to receive prayer and commit our lives over



Lyndon (with orange towell) with Life Group friends.

to GOD. I literally fell to my knees and surrendered my life over to JESUS CHRIST and began begging for His mercy and grace.

Since that day, it has definitely been a new life for me. This new life is one with new purpose and new ways of living. My mind and body both spiritually feel so refreshed, and I feel my life is now filled with God's love.

My previous lifestyle of clubbing, partying and undergoing activities which at the time I thought were fun, but not fulfilling, are no longer interesting to me. I'm now part of the Melville Life Group and enjoy the genuine love, support, friendship and encouragement from being part of the Life Groups... it's just like a family!

Since young, I've always been encouraged by my Dad who is a doctor to take care of myself physically and health wise. Now I've realized that my inner spiritual health is just as important. When you're healthy inside, it will affect you on the outside. This is why I now commit to daily devotion and prayer in GOD.

With a new heart GOD's given me, I now feel that my life is now one of living victoriously, with happiness and joy. All glory to Christ Jesus! ■



Miracle Cafe started in 1999 with the purpose to serve, bless and impact the community where GOD placed us. Initially located in the City of Melville, the Miracle Cafe was then moved to the City of Perth when the Church moved into Cana House in 2002.

The concept of Miracle Cafe began as a place for the community to enjoy the FREE COOKED FOOD and DRINKS while our live band played so that we could use the opportunity to relate to them. However, over the years GOD has used this vehicle for another purpose - Miracle Cafe is not just a charity house, but moreover an opportunity to bring the love of JESUS CHRIST to the community.

Two years ago Pastor Jimmy incorporated into Miracle Cafe 20 minute messages of the WORD ending with 5 - 10 minutes in prayer. As seeds of GOD's truth have been faithfully sown each week, we have seen an increase of homeless and needy people not only come to partake of the FREE COOKED FOOD we offer, but also coming to listen to these impacting messages of hope, love, peace and joy with many receiving JESUS into their lives.

Miracle Café is now like a mini service for these people. Our team shares to the people that despite our different backgrounds and experiences in life, we are all valuable to GOD and that there is hope in Him. As we serve and minister to the people with sincere compassion, we have seen GOD breakthrough in their lives. With trust and relationship having been developed over the years, many now treat us like their own family, and this has opened the door for us to shine GOD's love, goodness, kindness and Kingdom values into their lives.

Our continual prayer is that GOD will break free all bondages from their lives, bringing healing, restoration and transformation in them so that they may live in the fullness of GOD's promised abundant life.

Paul Smulders

From living on the streets to having a new home.

Paul Smulders was born in Adelaide in 1967, but raised in WA in the Byford, Armadale area. Unlike many of us who were afforded the comfort of a well to do upbringing, Paul grew up in a harsh and abusive family environment with the lack of a father in his life, (who Paul says had left his mother when she was pregnant). So violent was his family environment that Paul recalls his twin sisters' heads being cracked together by his parents, while himself was also the receiving end of many physical and emotional attacks.

Unable to bear this as a young boy, Paul ran away from home at age 13 and found himself homeless on the streets for most of his life. Eventually, Paul would try to relieve his inner hurts and pain through heavy drinking, drugs, pills, and smoking marijuana.

The ongoing accumulation of these addictions would eventually result in Paul's health deteriorating to such a point that three months ago, Paul passed out and was sent to Hospital. At Hospital, he discovered that his blood pressure was at such a high level and that his kidneys were failing. His life was in other words, nearing death.

This shook Paul up that he grew further depressed, ended his relationship with his girlfriend and considered suicide. However, Paul would soon experience a miracle that only a loving GOD can fashion.

Paul had heard by word on the streets about Miracle Café (MC), a community outreach of Aflame Community Church where the needy and homeless can come in to enjoy and experience free home cooked

meals, drinks, live music and a message of love and hope found in JESUS CHRIST.

After regularly coming to MC, and accepting JESUS CHRIST's Gift of Salvation, Paul found himself receiving more strength and hope, and eventually developed a friendship with Pastor Jimmy and the team that serve at MC. While staying in Hospital, Paul recalls frequent visits by Pastor Jimmy where he would receive ongoing prayer and encouragement.

Paul would soon experience the miracle of answered prayers. From a condition in which doctors had told him he had not long to live, Paul's health has improved dramatically. His blood pressure has gone down considerably, he's no longer in hospital, and all this Paul truly considers is a real miracle.

GOD made a way for him to get his apartment not in under 6 months... but within 6 weeks!

Aside from his miracle in health, GOD has provided him with an apartment to stay in. After being told that he was to wait 6 months, the government later extended this to 18 months. However, not to be discouraged, GOD made a way for him to get his apartment not in under 6 months... but within 6 weeks! Paul was no longer homeless!

From all this, Paul says he is very grateful to still be alive. He hasn't touched alcohol and drugs for two years, is off depression medication and aims to give up smoking soon.

Paul's encouragement to others is to "Keep your chin up, keep fighting, go forward, not backward, don't give up and believe in GOD. He's all true, He's there to help you." ■

Michael Thompson

From only months to live to being grateful to still be alive today.

Michael Thompson is a former Australian Army officer born in 1948 at St Annes Hospital, Mt Lawley. Now 61 years old, Mike's life is one that's fairly common in the lives of many living on the streets.

As a normal Aussie growing up in Perth, Mike enjoyed playing sports such as hockey and in his later years of teenage life had a job at a glass factory making mirrors.

However, as often happens in life, things did not pan out as hoped. At age 18, a friend of Mike and his father were involved in a tragic car accident, with Mike's friend accidentally running over Mike's father. This accident shook not only Mike, but his entire family, with much blame and guilt laid upon him due to his friend's involvement in the incident.

Unable to bear the continual hurts in his life, Michael began taking up smoking and drinking. As life progressed, he settled down and started his own family.

But further problems came, with his wife leaving him abruptly for another man and consequently Mike losing close ties with his three daughters and son. Michael would soon find himself living in the streets.

As he began to hit age 60, the accumulation of smoking and drinking began to take a toll on his health. Over a year ago, Michael suffered a massive heart attack with doctors giving dire news that he had only months to live.

Being homeless and hearing word on the streets about Miracle Café, Michael came and enjoyed the hot meals, the live music, and the sermon messages by Pastor



Jimmy on hope and salvation through JESUS CHRIST. He accepted JESUS into his heart and many prayed with Michael for recovery of his health.

By GOD's mercy, and now much longer than what doctors have predicted, Michael is still alive today! Michael says, "I've found more peace, and am very much grateful to still be alive."

Today, Michael admits he's still a work in progress, but has drastically cut down on drinking and smoking. As a final word, Michael wants to encourage others that they should "lay off the booze and keep off the drugs, because I've seen the destruction it has caused in my life." ■



BUSY or PRODUCTIVE?

There comes a stage in everyone's life when the simplicity of the "all play I say" life begins to evolve into a faster and more "challenging" aspect of what we generally term "busyness." Everywhere you hear, people are always telling each other "how busy" they are. But is always being "busy" how our lives should be?

NEWS FLASH! Did you know? Everyone in this life has the EXACT SAME AMOUNT OF HOURS per day in a week? So let's question... who would you term as more busy? The man who is constantly partying with friends, or the one who uses his time to work and help others? Both. GOD'S Word says:

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.
Ephesians 5: 15-16 (NLT)

So it's clear. "Busy" doesn't always equate to "wise" use of time. So what can we do? Our wise grandpa chief elder advisor, Dr Kevin J Conner, shared something pretty profound. At nearly 80 years old, he has more satisfaction and fulfillment than most

of his peers, (and might I add more health and life) because since very young, he has disciplined himself to be productive in how he utilizes and balances his time. In essence, his life has been lived out without barely any "what ifs". This reminds me of what Paul mentions in the first book of Corinthians:

Everything is permissible (allowable and lawful) for me; but not all things are helpful (good for me to do, expedient and profitable when considered with other things).
1 Corinthians 6:12a (AMP)

So how to do we know how to make wise use of our "hours" in life? Here are some basic points I've learnt:

Be clear about your purpose and direction in life. What is GOD's calling upon your life? Seek to find out and take responsibility for it. This will lay the foundation for the next point:

Know your priorities. Seriously, know what they are. Try to break it down and be specific. Attach meaning to it in relation to your calling.

Focus in on DOING the activities that align with your priorities and calling. This makes it clearer what you should say "no" to when your schedule is tight, and what activities in your "to do list" or "appointments" you should be more devoted towards. This takes discipline, by breaking bad habits and eliminating wrong desires that hinder this!

Challenge your excuses. Quit whining and complaining. Grow up! Mindsets can limit you, adopt a more faith filled "can do all things through CHRIST" attitude.

Learn to rest BUT only with the condition that it is after fruitful and productive labor. Isn't it strange how you feel amazingly awesome relaxing after a crazy amount of hard work or intense exam study? IT'S NOT MEANT TO BE STRANGE! Rest and relaxation is enjoyed more after you've done something productive. One shouldn't addictively overwork (unhealthy obsession) to be too busy for family and friends. We should "work to live, not live to work." There's a saying: "We are never too busy for what we treasure."

GOD has always intended from the beginning that everyone be a hard worker, not an "easy slacker". However, with hard work, it's a matter of what are we working hard for? There's a difference. One can be busy doing the same thing over and over, which has *motion* but lacks any *direction*. Or one can be *productive*, PRODUCING with clear direction and purpose. Guess which one is more satisfying? Clearly the latter.

Everyone living on this earth has goals, to have a good career, good family, etc. Goals are good. However, Matthew 6:33 clearly says that the highest purpose in which we are to seek, and I believe work hard in being productive in, is for the KINGDOM OF GOD and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The good news is, when you put GOD first in your life, His Grace will abound in you, empowering you to do things much more efficiently. On top of that, GOD promises to meet our needs, (not our greeds), meaning you'll receive the best for your career and personal life. Yes, it's true: GOD always desires the best for us! Work, and indeed life, will begin to be enjoyable and much more fulfilling.

So ask yourself, am I content with being just **BUSY**, or do I want to be **PRODUCTIVE**? ■



Getting baptised is the best decision I have made in my life. I felt peace I have not felt before and overwhelmingly happy, When asked "how I feel after being baptised?" "As light as a feather!" I answer! I am now trusting God in all my ways, and have gained new strength from above to overcome things I could not have done myself. **Mario.**

Mandurah Cruise on Anzac Day was an enjoyable day of gathering the Church, along with their family and friends, for a time of fellowship, fun and relaxation. There were lots of excitement as we spent most of the day on the waters enjoying the breath-taking view around Mandurah, as well as seeing the many dolphins swimming alongside our cruise boats.

- Stephanie



Ever since learning more about JESUS, my purpose in life, and being among such wonderful brothers and sisters from Church, I decided to get baptised. Before, I had no clue what it was all about.

The feeling of coming out of the pool afterwards was refreshing and I felt so reborn, like a new born baby!

It is the best thing I have ever done in my life, the closest thing to ever touch my heart, and it makes me want to fall in love more with JESUS. Without JESUS, I dont know how I would've made it this far in my life. Thank you LORD! **Kharisma.**



The Mandurah Cruise on ANZAC Day was a special day because of the great family atmosphere and the time of fun we all had.

- Katie





"Thank you for inviting me to Good Friday. At first, I didn't expect much, but I'm glad I came because I now realize what I've been missing all this while. It even brought tears to my eyes." - Emma



Easter Sunday March



"I will show you my FAITH by my WORKS."
James 2: 18b



"Every year, we participate in the Easter March to celebrate on the streets JESUS CHRIST's resurrection. We want to tell the world what Easter really is all about, and the reason we can celebrate the Special Day with such great joy and thanksgiving!" -Stephanie

Good Friday 2009



God's Love, is not to be kept idle, but it needs to be lived, told, sang and spread - it has the Power, to rescue lives; the Power, to save. Living Hope is found in our saviour - JESUS CHRIST!





Aflame
Community Church
AFLAME WITH GOD'S LOVE

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