

PresLife



MAGAZINE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF QUEENSLAND

Rebuild or Renovate?

**God's Church
in Qld**
Acacia Ridge
Rockhampton

**9 workers for the
Gospel share
their story**

**The Gospel of
Jesus Christ**

**Bringing news, views and inspiration to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland as well as
seeking to bring Glory to God and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

VOLUME 21 QUARTERLY ISSUE 1 2017

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Pres Life

Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.

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Contents

Events Around the State	4
The Gospel of Jesus Christ	5
Renovate or Rebuild?	6
Ministry Appointments	7
God's Church in Queensland	12
News from Around the State	14
Queensland Theological College	16
APWM	17
PIM	18
PresCare	19

Briefly

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Events Around the State

500th Anniversary of the Reformation

This is your invitation to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses and the launch of the Protestant Reformation. In October the Presbyterian Church of Australia will mark this event and we invite you to engage in the most appropriate way suiting your local context.

"Taking God Seriously" is the theme ... and October 2017 is our chance:

- to reacquaint ourselves with Reformation truth;
- to take a firm hold of free and sovereign grace offered through Christ; and
- to engage in the great task of evangelisation of the lost.

To help us remember and to reacquaint ourselves with Reformation truth, we're offering free internet access to two historical video presentations on Luther, covering two periods of his life. These will be suitable for use in small group ministry, will run for approximately half an hour, and will have useful discussion questions attached.

To help us take a firm hold on Christ and to understand free and sovereign grace more clearly, we're publishing the book, *Truth Matters* in which eight Australian Presbyterian ministers have each written a chapter on the major theological themes of the Bible. This book is ideal for home Bible study groups, and is still available for \$5 per copy (or 12 for \$50) from the NSW Church offices. Contact: general@pcnsw.org.au.

To help us engage in the great task of evangelisation of the lost, we're encouraging every congregation to organise outreach events within their own community. To assist, a panel of PCA-trained evangelists from throughout the nation is being assembled and will be available upon request.

In Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, we have assembled evangelists to be available to churches. Local churches are asked to organise evangelistic events. Contact David Cook: dac@damc.com.au.

Four tracts have been produced. We are grateful to Bill Medley, Phil Campbell, Bryson Smith, and Cameron and Rachel Griffiths for these. They are ideal to hand out to people or to have available at your church door: *Three Reasons To Take God Seriously*; *Why should you take Jesus seriously?*; *Hungry Hearts* and the one for children *Taking God Seriously* are now all available at: general@pcnsw.org.au. These have been produced thanks to funding from the General Assembly Trustees and are available for the cost of **postage only**.

Finally, Moderator-General, John Wilson and his wife, Paula are leading a tour of Reformation sites in Europe to coincide with the actual date of Luther's public challenge, 31 October—this tour is now closed—but you are invited to pray for its success and witness. For two days the tour group meets in conference with the World Reformed Fellowship Assembly in historic Wittenberg.

Our Committee has worked hard to make these resources available so that our celebration of the Reformation might have an eternal impact. Please pray that they will.

John P Wilson
Moderator-General, PCA

TRUTH MATTERS



'Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.' John 17.17

Edited by David Cook





Stock image

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

by Dr Robyn Bain, GiST Convener

How do we change our society? As our community is becoming rapidly shaped by ethics that are far from what we are used to or comfortable with, and as we worry about the damage that will be involved, what do we do? How do we make a difference?

In Paul's day, society was riddled with sexual immorality, political corruption and the evils of slavery. In Greek and Roman society there were no biblical foundations underpinning accepted behaviour. In Acts 26 Paul had the opportunity to stand and speak before the might of Agrippa with all his pomp and majesty. Was his big aim to raise the slavery or sexual immorality problem? Or to get himself freed? No—he told Agrippa the Gospel story and called on him to respond.

There are many ways to love our neighbours individually and politically. However, one of the foundational documents of the Gospel in Society Today (GiST) Committee, The Gospel of Jesus Christ (http://www.pcq.org.au/pcq_pdf_gist/gist-the-gospel-of-jesus-christ-08-15.pdf) explains that it is the Gospel that will really change people. The Gospel is our passion. What we have to offer the world is not a bare list of 'shoulds' and 'shouldn'ts'. First and foremost, we offer the magnificent story of Jesus—God's beloved Son sent to become one of us, to die as a substitute for us, take our punishment for us, who rose victorious over death and sin, who ascended to the Father as Lord of all, and who will return to judge. It is this story that shapes and changes everything we desire and do. Our 'ethics' flow in every way from the Gospel story.

Therefore, we need to speak about the Gospel story when we speak about ethics. The Word of God certainly contains ethical and normative standards which we apply to issues we confront today. For example, if the issue is gambling, then the biblical teachings in the areas of greed, wise use of resources, wise care of our families and so on, when applied, will go a certain way in helping people to understand God's expectations. It will only go a certain way because exposing the rights and wrongs

will leave many with crippling burdens of guilt and perhaps hopelessness. In others it may actually reinforce pride because they are not enslaved to the particular problem. Therefore, the second perspective, the hope of the Gospel is required to complete the biblical picture. Through forgiveness in Jesus Christ and the work of the Spirit through the Word, lives paralysed by bad behaviour can be changed and hope in the resurrection and new creation can be secured.

The GiST paper uses Ephesians 2:1-10 to outline the key points of the story we need to talk about:

1. **The Problem of Sin (Eph 2:1-3)** – we naturally make terrible errors of judgement and are desperately warped by self-centredness. More than that, without Christ we are dead to the God who made us and who does see clearly and knows what is right. Our natural inclination is to turn against him. We are enslaved to evil and cannot free ourselves. We face the justice of God for our rebellion and desperately need a saviour. Our situation is grave indeed.
2. **The Solution (Eph 2:4-10)** – God takes the first step to rescue us from our grave situation. Take one look at Jesus on the cross and we see that God has rich love towards us. We are forgiven and handed the treasure of new life. This is not because we deserve to be loved but because of God's mercy in Jesus. In love and in union with Christ, God also changes our hearts, helping us to throw over our warped selfishness and rebellion, to see more clearly, and to please him in the things we do.

So in talking to others and (anyone in our) communities about ourselves, we should be ready to talk about the beautiful righteousness of God, our natural, sinful rejection of Him, our helplessness and our desperate need for mercy and help. But we must not stop there. We must speak of the love, grace, justice and mercy God has shown to his fallen world in Christ, and His power to change us. And we must pray that He will change those we speak to!



Stock image

Renovate or Rebuild?

by Mike O'Connor, Minister at Rockhampton Presbyterian Church

Dylan and Kayla from Adelaide didn't fare well during the state-wide blackout last October in South Australia. In fact, for them it was a pretty messy outcome. Following the storm, power was cut to their local pumping station.

Dylan returned home from work, but couldn't get to his house because of the rising floodwater. He parked his Commodore in a nearby street and waded through the floodwater to get into his house. The water that ran through Dylan's house was now knee-deep, only it wasn't water.

Dylan and Kayla's home in Adelaide's ironically named suburb, 'Dry Creek' had been inundated with raw sewage. "Be careful", Dylan said to the news cameraman, "there's still faeces everywhere, it's not very pleasant at all".

Months later, when I caught up with Dylan, he and Kayla were still living with her parents, assessing the damage, cleaning up the mess and trying to decide if they should renovate or rebuild.

The condition of the Roman Church in 1517, was kind of like Dylan and Kayla's house at Dry Creek. The church was not just covered in its own theological and leadership mess, it was swimming in immorality.

The rumbling discontent against the church was so widespread throughout the Holy Roman Empire, that it is not just a Reformation that we look back on, but reformations. The 16th century reformation was never simply about one man (Luther), rather it was God using multiple people to bring about a movement of the Gospel which would re-form the church.

The church in Europe had become depraved because its leadership had become so wicked. Monasteries were considered 'rat infested dens of sexual perversion' and sexual misconduct amongst the priesthood was rife. The church and its clergy were making lots of money, through tax free exemptions and vast land acquisitions, while the people around them were going broke from bearing the burdens of heavy taxation.

Mainly in the regional areas, hostility grew as leadership titles within the church were being bought up and claimed by the royal and wealthy elite. Some 'office bearers' never even lived within the diocese that they held title for. While some parish priests who lived within their diocese would just go missing for extended periods of unexplained absenteeism.

When it came to people being at their most vulnerable with loved ones on their deathbeds, the church taught that priests

were indispensable for admission into eternal life. Catholicism taught that only the priest could offer the sacrament of 'last rites' to the dying who would then be in a 'state of grace' before God, a state which insured eternal salvation. Those who died outside of this 'state of grace', in unconfessed sins were condemned to purgatory, a place for the dead before being accepted into heaven.

However, the sale of indulgences was the bingo game of the 16th century. The church had not only put a price on entering eternity, they were now selling eternity to people for a price. Pope Leo X offered for sale the purchase of indulgences, and for the right price, you could purchase an indulgence for your loved ones and be issued a certificate of guarantee, fast tracking them out of their final purification sooner. With the purchase of indulgences, time in purgatory could be remitted by as much as 1,902, 202 years and 270 days.

The money collected from the wealthy and the royal for ecclesiastical titles, as well as from the vulnerable in the sale of indulgences was used to pay for the construction of St. Peter's Basilica, in Rome.

Historically, the church held all the answers to life's important questions, but now it was being surrounded by questions as the man in the street not only grew suspicious of the church, but became increasingly hostile towards it.

As we pause to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, it is worth us pausing as a denomination to reflect on the condition of our church and to ask what, if anything, has really changed for the man on the street as he looks at us? This, however, was the condition of the church in 1517. So, do you rebuild or renovate? Luther chose to renovate.

On the night of 31 October 1517, the young Augustinian Monk nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. 95 points of theological disagreement with the current teaching and practices of the church which exposed the abuse of indulgences, which denied the power and the authority of the papacy and questioned the Pope's pastoral care of people.

Not posted by a rebel, but to begin a debate that might lead to reform, not to start a new church, but bring back into line a church that had wandered so far from its gospel foundations.

500 years later, now is a good time for us to reflect on whether we rebuild or renovate the church in line with God's Word. As the old saying goes, 'those who can't remember the past are often doomed to repeat it'.

Ministry Appointments



Dave Bailey

Wife: Sarah

Children: Josh, Matthew and Jesse

Position: Minister at Warwick

What excites you most about your appointment?

The opportunity for Sarah and I to serve together in a new season of life, with a fresh challenge, on mission with a whole bunch of God's people we've set our heart upon but are yet to meet.

Why did you feel called to this position?

I'm called to follow Jesus and to enjoy calling others to do the same. There are plenty of harvests in Warwick, but few workers!

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

Making me a father of sons—using my stumbling fatherhood to teach me about true sonship.

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

Federal Parliamentarian OR running a string of small businesses OR Bank Executive AND playing Golden Oldies Rugby Union.

What social issue concerns you the most?

Idolatry – most especially of the state.

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

John, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', because he loved his master so passionately and imaginatively, right to the end.

When are you happiest?

Under the high ball, with the opposition forward pack hunting me down.

What book changed you?

"I am David" by Anne Holm.

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

Seriously mate, don't take yourself so seriously!

Peter Davies

Wife: Emma

Children: Thomas and another one on the way

Position: Ministry worker at Cairns

What excites you most about your appointment?

I'm really excited by the way God is graciously working through the ministry team to grow his church with people from all different backgrounds, ages and stages of life.

Why did you feel called to this position?

My mother is from Cairns and my father is from Townsville, so I guess North Queensland was in my blood. My wife and I long to see regional Queensland well resourced for Gospel ministry and felt called be part of that solution.

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

I now live in a world where a man has defeated death. This changes everything.

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

Probably still working as a hydrologist for the Queensland State Government and sharing the Gospel with any civil servant who would listen.

What social issue concerns you the most?

The issue of abortion and providing mothers with an alternative option that gives them support through the pregnancy and future parenting.

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

Peter: I have always admired my namesake. I love how we see his passion, eagerness and weak humanity.

When are you happiest?

When I am with Emma, Thomas and my church family worshiping God and doing life together. A distant second is whitewater kayaking down the Barron River.

What book changed you?

Cross and the Switchblade by David Wilkerson

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

Worry less about what people think of you and more about what God thinks of you.

Ministry Appointments



Sam McGeown

Wife: Yoriko

Children: Rae, Megi, Nina and Jack

Position: Pastor at Village Church

What excites you most about your appointment?

The opportunity to serve together with such a great bunch of sisters and brothers at Village.

Why did you feel called to this position?

Because 94 people out of 100 people in Brisbane are not in church on Sunday morning.

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

In growing my heart for the lost.

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

I would be running a fish and chip shop

What social issue concerns you the most?

Individualism

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

Boaz: he is a great example of God's unmerited grace who points us clearly to Jesus.

When are you happiest?

When I'm in a room full of friends, family and strangers.

What book changed you?

The Cross of Christ by John Stott

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

Jesus really is all you need.

Katie Allan

Position: Pastoral and Administration Assistant at Wavell Heights

What excites you most about your appointment?

I get to hang out with different people at different places in life. I'm privileged to see God working in them—one step at a time—as he brings them to maturity in Christ.

Why did you feel called to this position?

I like how Paul and Co said they loved the Thessalonians so much that they didn't just share the Gospel with them but their lives as well. There are many ways each of us can share life and the Gospel with others; this is the one God has opened up for me just now.

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

God's brought me from death to life. He's made very dry bones live, and replaced a stony heart with a heart of flesh. That's huge!

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

I've no idea!

What social issue concerns you the most?

Many people I care about are impacted by mental illness. I've got a long way to go in my understanding and learning how best to support those who struggle.

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

I don't know about 'favourite' but I reckon I'd like to meet Nicodemus.

When are you happiest?

When I'm in the bush, when I'm swimming in open water, or after a mutually encouraging conversation.

What book changed you?

Not so much profoundly changed as subtly shaped... *Tracks* by Robyn Davidson.

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

Find someone to read the Bible and pray with. And, God's got work to do in you.



Rohan Pieris

Wife: Heather

Children: Jasmine and Matilda

Position: Assistant Pastor at Graceville

What excites you most about your appointment?

Helping people join the dots between understanding the Gospel and living it out in the practical details and decisions of life. Whether it be in conversations or teaching the Bible, it's a privilege to be involved in God's work as He transforms lives through Christ.

Why did you feel called to this position?

After studying at SMBC in Sydney, God had been growing our passion for pastoral ministry and we were drawn to Graceville because it was a forward-thinking, gospel-minded church in an area where we fitted the average demographic. We saw an exciting ministry opportunity where our gifts could be utilised, and became convinced through prayer and discussion to get involved in God's mission up here!

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

It's more an attitude that affects many different areas of life on a daily basis. God has helped me and keeps helping me (against my natural sinful tendency) to see that there's no place for half-heartedness in living as a disciple of Jesus, because everything belongs to Him!

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

Working as a corporate lawyer, which is what I did before Bible College.

What social issue concerns you the most?

Refugees. I don't envy the task of politicians to come up with a workable policy, but I still think that as a wealthy nation, we need to have a more compassionate response towards those in desperate situations.

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

The Apostle Paul: I find his single-minded commitment to Christ and willingness to make extreme sacrifices for

the Gospel pretty inspiring. He's also got a great personal testimony and wrote some amazing letters which I love reflecting and preaching on.

When are you happiest?

Enjoying a nice meal and in-depth conversation with Heather and a few close friends.

What book changed you?

As a university student, I was really impacted by reading John Piper's book, *Desiring God*. It helped me to grasp the place of godly emotions and affections in the Christian life, without sacrificing a commitment to biblical truth as the unwavering anchor for our souls.

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

Trust the wisdom and goodness of God because he knows how life works best. I trusted Jesus as Saviour from a young age, but in the latter years of school I was more inclined to follow what my friends were doing than Him.



Russell Williams

Wife: Jocelyn

Children: Talia, Benaiah, Chloe and Mattias

Position: Assistant Minister (Church Planting) at Redlands

What excites you most about your appointment?

As a church plant we'll be pushed back to basics—how will we share the Gospel with people in Redland Bay and do we trust Christ to change their lives?

Why did you feel called to this position?

From my experience starting the young adult ministry at Arundel I've learnt I love working with a team to create new, Christ-centred, communities.

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

The Gospel taught me I was loved by God unconditionally, and so I was released to pursue a life that honoured God without the fear and guilt of whether I've achieved it.

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

Ideally, a programming or engineering job that left plenty of time and emotional energy to be involved in gospel ministry. (But do they exist...?)

What social issue concerns you the most?

That we value personal freedom so much we refuse to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Heaps of other issues upset me, but that's the fundamental issue that distorts my life and others.

Ministry Appointments

continued from page 9

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

I aspire to be a Timothy. His selfless involvement in ministry, and his need to keep declaring the Gospel without getting caught up in self-promoting arguments.

When are you happiest?

Making genuine connections with another individual. In particular, meaningful conversations with my kids and most of all with Jocelyn. But it's also why I love ministry.

What book changed you?

I learnt the Gospel from *Transforming Grace* by Jerry Bridges. But I think Stott's *The Cross of Christ* reinvented my life priorities.

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

First, the cross means there is nothing more you can do to be acceptable to God, or to others. Second, a boy lives for himself, but a man (and especially THE man, Jesus) lives for others.



Brad Dewson

Wife: Shauna

Children: Mark and Aubrey

Position: Minister at Goondiwindi/Inglewood/Texas

What excites you most about your appointment?

After four years of college, I'm really looking forward to having a full-time job again! But I'm especially excited about being able to teach the Bible which is why I originally went to QTC.

Why did you feel called to this position?

While the placement process has been quite a journey, it's great to be able to have God's peace as we head back to the Darling Downs (where we are from) and into ministry in a country town.

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

Bringing me to the realization that Jesus is my Lord and not just my mate.

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

I like the idea of being a private investigator. Maybe I can still do that on my day off...

What social issue concerns you the most?

I think the erosion of the family unit is a serious problem, whether it be the actual breakdown of families, or the loss of community and discipleship within the home.

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

Not sure if he is my favourite, but I love the king of Gath's response when David knocks on his door pretending to be mad - "do I lack madmen that you bring this madman to me?" Makes me laugh every time.

When are you happiest?

When I can get up early before my family, go for a walk and spend time alone with the Lord before the day begins.

What book changed you?

I've read a lot of books but none particularly spring to mind that have been life changing. I think it's been more of a gradual, cumulative process.

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

You're going bald, enjoy your hair.



Pier Franchini

Wife: Kathryn

Children: Evangeline, Joash and expecting number 3

Position: Student Minister at Coorparoo

What excites you most about your appointment?

I think what excites me with any situation is an opportunity to make the Gospel known to people. Both by bringing out its beautiful complexity and seeing it vividly applied into the mundane existence of life. So that's what I look forward to at Coorparoo.

continued page 11

continued from page 10

Why did you feel called to this position?

A long answer shortened: Jesus so captivated my life that I wanted to make Him known in whatever context I was in. It turns out that I loved pastoral ministry and key godly people in my life helped me realise this in significant ways.

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

In almost every way, but more specifically regarding my heart. He freed me from that innate desire and pursuit of self-life being about only me, to being about something greater and better—Jesus. It's an incredible transformation that still blows my mind, that Jesus can transform the human heart—my heart. Not only reorienting my heart's desires, pursuits, pleasures, sorrows and joys, but also seeing that life in Him is much more satisfying and freeing.

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

Most likely something in the carpentry/manual labour industry. I worked for a time in this industry before, and I really enjoyed working hard and then clocking off at the end of the day.

What social issue concerns you the most?

That's a hard one as there are so many. Lately I have had my mind on the issues of sexual abuse and mental illness.

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

It would have to be Job. He's a godly man yet still so real, raw and honest. He doesn't sugarcoat things and yet he does it in the context of wanting to honour and glorify God. And he has this profound confidence in God: that God is big enough to handle his anger, his hurt, his despair without simply rejecting or cursing Him. So I love the way Job wrestles with God despite being in an incredibly awful situation and dark place.

When are you happiest?

I'm pretty simple: When I'm telling people about Jesus, spending time with my wife and children, and if you add reading a good book or watching a good movie into the mix then I'm pretty happy.

What book changed you?

That's a hard question. Two come to mind—only because they were given to me at the same time so its hard to choose just one. John Stott's *The Cross of Christ* and J.I Packer's *Knowing God*. Both are brilliant books that have had a profound impact on how I understand, pursue, worship and love God.

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

That there is hope in Jesus and He is far more satisfying! Pursue Him above all else.



Ben Smith

Wife: Stephanie

Children: Thomas and Annie

Position: Home Missionary at Logan

What excites you most about your appointment?

Shepherding the flock by preaching God's Word to them and getting alongside them.

Why did you feel called to this position?

I have felt called to pastoral ministry for a long time, and was willing to serve wherever God called me, and he opened the door for me to serve at Logan.

In what way has God changed your life the most significantly?

He changed me from being self-centered to being God-centered and others-centered, through Christ and by the Spirit.

If you weren't in ministry what would you be doing?

I have no idea. I have never wanted to do anything else.

What social issue concerns you the most?

The gradual erosion of religious freedom and freedom of speech. Although perhaps this will be good for the church as it seems to do best under persecution.

Other than Jesus, who is your favourite person in the Bible and why?

Other than for his letters, which I believe are the fullest explanation of the Gospel and its implications, Paul had an incredible God-given balance of a brilliant intellect and tender emotions.

When are you happiest?

When I'm walking closely with God. This usually corresponds with when I'm praying the most.

What book changed you?

Other than the Bible, Romans (I know that's probably cheating but I want to share just how much it impacted me). When I was 15 we were going through Romans verse-by-verse in our home group and I grew so much spiritually (probably the most in my life in such a short space of time).

What would you tell your 15 year old self?

How good is Romans. But more importantly, how good is God.

God's Church in Queensland

Acacia Ridge Presbyterian Church

Location

The church buildings are located in Acacia Ridge on the corner of Beaudesert and Mortimer Roads.

The Ministry Team

Dan Bigg (Minister), Weber Hsu (Assistant Minister), Steve Hay (Children's and Youth Pastor) and Jenny Homann (Office Administrator)

Demographic

We are a multicultural church with a fair percentage of people spanning all the age groups. The two morning congregations are suitable for all age groups while the evening congregation tends to have more young adults and youth.

Prayer Points

Pray for us to be an effective witness for Christ in our community as we strive to continue to live and share His saving message with others.

Pray for spiritual and numerical growth across all three of our congregations.



What is the church excited about doing to make followers of Jesus?

We are looking forward to shaping this year around the goal of REACHING those in our local community with the Gospel. This goal of reaching others will be encouraged at the whole church level, the growth group level and at the individual level. The way we are encouraging each other to reach out is to apply the command of Jesus, to love your neighbour as yourself.

Meet the People



Lesley Oostenbroek

How long have you been attending Acacia Ridge?

38 years

What do you do during the week?

Human Resources and Payroll Manager

What is the best thing about being at Acacia Ridge?

Solid Bible teaching followed up by my weekly growth group for support and accountability! And great encouragement for the entire family, from our Kidz Caperz group for toddlers right through to Super Seniors gatherings!



Jake den Otter

How long have you been attending Acacia Ridge?

12 years

What do you do during the week?

IT Manager at an engineering firm

What is the best thing about being at Acacia Ridge?

It's just great to be encouraged by the message, the pastoral team & people of all ages.



Mojtaba Besantan

How long have you been attending Acacia Ridge?

3 years

What do you do during the week?

I work as a machine operator in a cabinet (furniture) making factory.

What is the best thing about being at Acacia Ridge?

I was a Muslim for about 25 years. When I moved to Brisbane I was invited to this church and I found the true God, my saviour and His grace. The unconditional love of the Lord Jesus among the people here encouraged me to learn more about Christianity. I was baptised and became a Christian.

Rockhampton Presbyterian Church

Location

We are a multisite church with three campuses:

Southside in Rockhampton CBD

Northside on Burnett Street in North Rockhampton

Gracemere on Laurie Street in Gracemere

The Ministry Team

Mike O'Connor (Senior Minister), Andrew Poyser (Assistant Minister), Matt Stewart (MTN Trainee), Richard Butler (Volunteer Ministry Intern)

Demographic

Our demographic is as diverse as Rockhampton itself. We have people from all age groups and varying ethnic backgrounds attending church.

Prayer Points

Our church has a growing heart for the city and the people of Rockhampton. We want to reach our family, friends, neighbours and workmates with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Please pray for equipping, boldness and much fruit.



What is the church excited about doing to make followers of Jesus?

Encouraging our people to take God's Word seriously as they live for Jesus, and seeing that change shape their relationships with others.

Meet the People



Peter Foxwell

How long have you been attending Rockhampton?

12 years

What do you do during the week?

Farmer

What is the best thing about being at Rockhampton?

The great Bible teaching.



Enid Lees

How long have you been attending Rockhampton?

45 years

What do you do during the week?

I'm a retired primary school teacher. During the week I go to Bible study and in my spare time enjoy Sudoku and cryptic crosswords.

What is the best thing about being at Rockhampton?

The caring and loving church family. It's been eight years since I had my eye injury and people continue to care and love me like the day it first happened.



Daniel Thambiraj

How long have you been attending Rockhampton?

2 years

What do you do during the week?

Doctor

What is the best thing about being at Rockhampton?

Rocky PC aims to exegetically share the Word without reserve. I also love that the congregation are supportive and prayerful towards one another.

News from around the State

Gospel Growth in Gladstone

by Phil Campbell, State Moderator

I've been taking every opportunity to suggest we should be aiming (and praying) to have a vibrant Presbyterian Church in every Queensland town of more than 10,000 people. Every town with a Macca's should have a gospel hearted, Bible teaching Pressie church on the next corner as well.

Of course, some smaller centres are already batting way above the average. You don't need a town of 10,000 to sustain a great church. But at the other end of the scale, Gladstone is a five-Macca's city; and our gospel presence in recent years hasn't been what it should be. Our one small Presbyterian Church has been struggling.

The region has been facing significant economic challenges. With the recent completion of a gas plant, 5000 jobs simply disappeared overnight. And yet in spite of that Gladstone Presbyterian Church is now growing, and there's a new air of optimism under the enthusiastic leadership of Nathan and Naomi Shannon.

In mid-October last year, Louise and I made the short flight from Brisbane to Gladstone to spend a weekend with the Shannon family. On Saturday morning, Nathan, together with fellow ministers Andrew Purcell (Biloela), and Mike O'Connor and Andrew Poyer (Rockhampton), co-ordinated a preaching seminar for elders and ministry trainees.

On Sunday, Nathan introduced me to the early morning Benaraby congregation. Then it was back to town for the main service at Gladstone. Afterwards, 35 adults and a bunch of kids stayed behind for lunch.

"We're encouraged with Nathan here as our new minister," says elder Peter Bretchly. "Things are looking up. What's been good is that our Sunday school has grown from 3 to 24. Families are joining with us. We are looking forward to the future with a lot of optimism."

According to Peter, Nathan and Naomi bring youth, enthusiasm, fresh ideas and a Bible centred, Gospel focus. "This is a church that's valued that in the past," he says. "We're here to preach the Gospel and proclaim Jesus to the community. There's a willingness to accept new ideas and new ways of doing things. We're taking it steadily. People are very positive—and we realise we can't just keep doing the things we've been doing in the past."

Later I spoke to Ben and Dacey O'Brien, who have been part of the church with their three kids since transferring to town with Rio Tinto in early 2016. They're very positive too. "This is a very welcoming church," says Ben. "We really enjoy the service each week hearing some great sermons from Nathan." Of course, says Ben, having a beaut kids program has been important too. But the outstanding thing has been the sense of community. "Right from our first week everyone at morning tea was making us feel welcome. Dacey was quite unwell mid year and everyone really looked after us even though we'd only been here a few months," he says. "We really feel part of the church family."

Since our October visit, Nathan says momentum has continued to build through Term 4, and into the start of the new year. When I spoke to Nathan at the end of January this year, he told me they'd just had the largest Sunday attendance since moving to Gladstone in February 2016.

Please pray for Nathan and Naomi, their kids Trinity, Timmo, Rory and Gino, and their church family in Gladstone and Benaraby. Give thanks for the way God is growing His church in this five-Macca-city, and for the excellent teamwork developing among the members of Central Queensland Presbytery as they encourage one another in the work of the Gospel. It's a great model for the rest of us!



Top L-R: Trinity, Timmo and Rory

Bottom L-R: Naomi, Nathan, Gino, Phil and Louise Campbell



Church Family lunch

Progress Report on Northside Townsville

Sunday 13 November 2016 was a momentous day for the Northside congregation in Townsville. It was the day we turned the first sod on our new building!

We have been working to bring this project to fruition for several years now, so it was a great moment for us to celebrate together.

Also gathered with us were representatives of the other three Presbyterian churches in Townsville which have supported Northside since we launched in late 2010.

Work has since moved on and the walls have been put up. God-willing the new building will open sometime in the middle of this year.

We are looking forward to the new opportunities for sharing the Gospel of Jesus that having a physical presence in our community will bring, and give thanks to God for his provision.



Andrew Millsom (Minister at Northside) turning the first sod on the new building

Propel Camp 2017

As the school holidays drew to a close 76 teenagers arrived out at Lake Broadwater (near Dalby, the centre of the universe) to tackle the heat, fake gods and forge Jesus centred friendships.

Boy was it hot! We used plenty of sunscreen and probably drank more water than was in the lake itself. But this meant the heat didn't phase us too much. We swam, made campfires, cooked damper, shot super soakers, played footy, danced, belly flopped, ran around, played cards, foosball, mafia, walked an entire lake till we got tired and only just made it back, lost tents in a storm... so much happened during the week.

The one thing that didn't happen in the week and probably should have were showers. We are not sure if all the boys had showers.

Stu Hoadley helped us think through fighting fake gods and their constant attempts to push Jesus off the throne of our

hearts. It was great to hear campers beginning to identify fake gods in their lives (even the good things) as that is a great step towards being able to smash them.

As leaders our hope and prayer for Propel is that it is a camp that helps teenagers fix their eyes on Jesus and run on strong with Him throughout the year. Thanks Stu for helping us do that.

Thanks to all the campers who came. It really was a joy to be on camp with you and watch the way you included each other in whatever was going on.

A big thank you also to all the leaders along with Eatons Hill and Dalby Presbyterian Churches... thanks for faithfully serving Jesus and teenagers.





Queensland Theological College's New Home

To our great delight, the new Queensland Theological College building on 369 Boundary Street, Spring Hill is officially up and running! It has been a long journey to our new home and we are massively grateful to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland for enabling this to happen.



Dirk and Margaret Klokman (left) and Jurgen and Janet Kohlmannhuber (right) from our Project Control Group have served generously and sacrificially in establishing our new home.

The building is exceptionally well-equipped for our needs which frees us up to focus on our core business of training men and women for gospel ministry. Wesley Redgen, QTC Lecturer

I think it's great that this building has more of a common space not just for students to hang out, but also to share and learn from God's Word together. Mario Cheng, QTC Student



QTC Study Tour to Greece and Turkey 26th November - 12th December, 2017

Join us as we tour archaeological sites of the New Testament. The focus of the tour is to place the events and teaching of the New Testament in their historical and cultural context. As you stand where the stories happened, prepare yourself for the regular experience of saying, "Ahh, now I see why ...".

For more information or to register please visit
www.qtc.edu.au/courses/study-tour.





The Australian Presbyterian World Mission exists to glorify God by facilitating the spread of the gospel to people overseas and Aborigines within Australia.

Australian Presbyterian World Mission

www.apwm.org.au 81 Shaftesbury Road, Burwood NSW 2134 (02) 8073 7490 national@apwm.org.au

THANK YOU!

Many will know that the Rev Dr Thang Bwee of Myanmar recently had open heart surgery in Sydney which was paid for by the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The following is an excerpt from a thank you letter.



Rev Dr Thang Bwee

"I am now at home again in Myanmar with a new repaired heart. I arrived home on the 28th December and I'm now preparing to begin my normal ministry. I would like to express my thanks to Australian Presbyterian World Mission and the Presbyterian Church of Australia for your wonderful partnership in the ministries of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar and the Reformed Bible Institute and thanks indeed for your love and care during the battle for my life. Without your kindly concern and care, it wouldn't have been possible to solve my health problems. Rather I would still be wandering without a clear idea of what to do about my health.

But now God is restoring my strength with new repaired heart and I am confident to move on to my normal ministries.

Thanks to the members of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and those outside the Presbyterian Church for your prayers, love and contributions to meet the needs of my heart surgery.

My grateful prayer for everyone of you is that our God may bless you richly continually and use you for His glory and Kingdom.

With thanks and appreciation,
Thang Bwee.

MARTIN EAGLE

On October 28, 2016 the APWM National Committee made the difficult decision not to renew Martin Eagle's terms of appointment which expire at the end of May 2017.

Over the last few years APWM has been working closely with Martin to help him be as effective as possible as he serves Christ in Myanmar. During that time, however, Martin has faced a number of challenges in trying to gain sufficient fluency in the Burmese language. We have also had many conversations with the Rev Dr Thang Bwee, regarding ways that Martin can be assisted in improving his Burmese language fluency. It is now clear that Martin's Burmese language skills will not be sufficient to enable him to freely teach and preach in Burmese.

This decision is particularly hard for Martin who has given so much of himself as he has been serving the Lord Jesus Christ in Myanmar. We thank him for his willingness to follow the call of the Lord Jesus, and for being willing to leave behind family and friends and the relative comfort of Australia to serve in a foreign context.

Thank you for the support that you have each given to Martin — through prayer, encouragement and financial gifts. Please join us in praying for Martin that he would know God's peace and direction in his life as he seeks God's leading in the next few months.



Martin Eagle

NATHAN & TOMOKO STEWART

It was with joy that Nathan and Tomoko Stewart were commissioned on the 23rd October at Browns Plains Presbyterian Church in Brisbane for service in Japan. We anticipate that they will soon commence serving in Osaka.

WORKPARTNERS 2017



Workpartners recently completed its latest project: refurbishing a student dormitory at the Talua Theological Institute. Planning is now underway for Workpartners Vanuatu for 2017 at Talua. We anticipate sending teams in (a) late June or early July (b) November.

If you are interested in taking part in Workpartners in 2017, then please email Sheryl Sarkoezy at APWM national@apwm.org.au to be placed on a list of people interested in hearing more about Workpartners.

APWM

To support APWM missionaries financially please go to www.apwm.org.au/supporting/finance

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ON TRACK

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN INLAND MISSION

ISSUE 1 2017

PROCLAIMING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
BY WORD AND DEED

BACK ON TRACK IN TASMANIA

Tucked away, off the beaten track, and away from the main cities and towns, live people who are isolated from all sorts of things including schools, banks and health care. But most significantly, many of these people are isolated from the Gospel. The places where they live often have no active Bible-teaching church, and few Christians to bear witness to the love of Jesus.

In most places where PIM works, isolation is caused by the vast distances between homes and towns. Some of the people we visit live more than a hundred miles from their neighbours. Some of them live on properties that have a driveway seventy kilometres long. But in other places, isolation can be real even though the distances are much smaller. In parts of Tasmania, for example, there are remote areas where people live with a real sense of isolation. They may not be more than an hour from a town, but nevertheless the isolation is real and it cuts them off from the Gospel.

In the not-too-distant past, PIM has had active work in the Midlands area of Tasmania, halfway between Launceston and Hobart.

This area is scattered with farms and small towns, often without much Christian witness. PIM has sought to fill in some of those gaps, and help connect people with Jesus. After a season of vacancy in the area, the Lord has graciously provided the personnel so that PIM can once again bring the Gospel into that area.

Kim Jaeger, along with Kathryn and their daughter Sarah have joined the PIM Team. Native Tasmanians, the Jaegers are returning home after spending a couple of years in Queensland where Kim has been studying at the Queensland Theological College and working in ministry at a Presbyterian Church in the Brisbane area. The family will be based in Hobart and Kim will spend time ministering in the Midlands area and in the NW part of Tasmania. Kim's role will involve visiting people on the many properties in these areas, and seeking to build relationships, share the gospel and help make disciples for Jesus amongst people with little current access to the Church. Kim will also undertake some



Kim, Kathryn and Sarah

preaching duties. In many of the places Kim ventures into, he will likely be one of the few believers to actively witness there, he may even be the only one.

Many PIM patrol areas are larger than the whole of Tasmania. However, Kim will still be spending a lot of time on the road as he seeks to get to all sorts of out-of-the-way locations. Your prayers for safety will be most welcome.

During the first few months of 2017, Kim will be visiting a range of churches to share about the ministry and seek prayer and financial support for the work. By involving a wider range of people and congregations in helping to fund this ministry, PIM is seeking to make this work sustainable well into the future. If you are able to partner with us in this journey by making a one-off or regular contribution, please contact Mike Timmins in the PIM office to make those arrangements. If you would like to learn more of the work and prayer for the Jaegers please contact them directly so you can keep up to date with what is happening.



The Midlands area of Tasmania



We're not aged care, we're PresCare

Following changes within the Australian aged care sector, PresCare has taken a new strategic direction for our marketing and brand activity. We have firmly positioned ourselves as a provider of individualised home care services through a television and online advertising campaign, alongside an updated brand, website and organisational philosophy.

Changes in the Australian Aged Care model mean that consumers can direct their government funding to their provider of choice. PresCare has taken steps to ensure that Queenslanders know that the services we offer can be tailored to suit each person's individual needs, interests and values with a statewide campaign that launched in February.

"We're moving away from the one size fits all approach and clichéd imagery this sector has been immersed in for too long, and recognising the individuality, abilities and characteristics of our ageing baby boomer generation who want control, choice and independence. We celebrate the individual and recognise that people are all different," stated PresCare's Chief Executive Officer, Greg Skelton.



We understand the importance of people remaining independent regardless of their age. The two television ads separately feature Tom and Liz who are able to continue to do the things they love – playing footy and tending to the tomato garden – with a little support from PresCare's home care services.

The brand campaign also saw the launch of a refreshed logo and strapline for the organisation moving from 'more connected' to 'It's more you' to reflect this customer-centric approach.

The renewed philosophy was brought to life via a new website which aims to put the needs of the customer at the forefront. It includes a new online tool, 'Create my own care plan', which allows people to pick and choose the services they need to suit their financial circumstances and support needs.

This is the beginning of a new era in the way people will receive assistance and demonstrates our ethos and focus on providing services which are appropriate for the individual.

Despite having been established for more than 85 years, PresCare has continued to evolve its service offering to meet the changing needs of a growing sector.

For further information on our home care services and to see the new brand and website, please visit www.prescare.org.au



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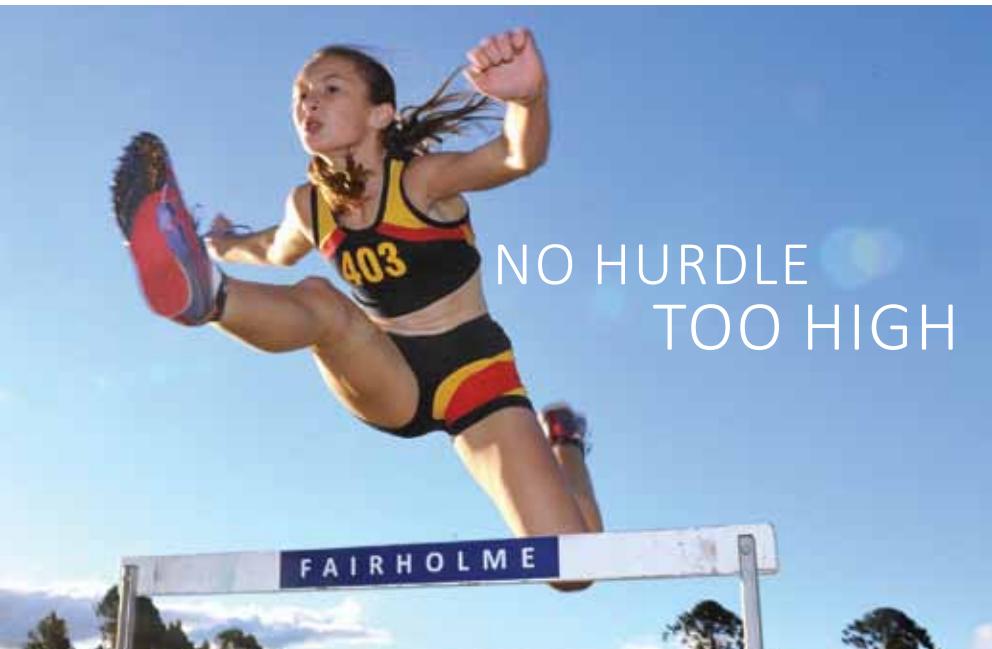
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