

Pres Life

MAGAZINE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF QUEENSLAND

Mark of Grace

Sharing the life of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland as we glorify God and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our communities, nation and the world.

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Time with God

Read the entire Bible in 2020

Week 29

- ☐ 1 Kings 19-21; 2 Chr 17; Psalm 129; Matthew 1
- ☐ 1 Kings 22; 2 Chr 18; Matt 2
- ☐ 2 Chr 19-20; 2 Kings 1; Psalm 20; Matt 3
- ☐ 2 Kings 2-3; Psalm 48; Matt 4
- ☐ 2 Kings 4-6; Matt 5

Week 30

- ☐ 2 Kings 7-8; 2 Chr 21; Matt 6
- ☐ 2 Kings 9-10; Psalm 49; Matt 7
- ☐ 2 Chr 22-23; 2 Kings 11; Psalm 131; Matt 8
- ☐ 2 Chr 24; 2 Kings 12; Psalm 50; Matt 9
- ☐ Joel; Matt 10

Week 31

- ☐ Jonah; Matt 11
- ☐ 2 Kings 13-14; 2 Chr 25; Psalm 53; Matt 12
- ☐ Amos 1-3; Matt 13
- ☐ Amos 4-6; Psalm 55; Matt 14
- ☐ Amos 7-9; Matt 15

Week 32

- ☐ Hosea 1-3; Matt 16
- ☐ Hosea 4-6; Psalm 58; Matt 17
- ☐ Hosea 7-10; Matt 18
- ☐ Hosea 11-13; Matt 19
- ☐ Hosea 14; 2 Chr 26-27; Psalm 61; Matt 20

Week 33

- ☐ 2 Kings 15-16; Matt 21
- ☐ Isaiah 1-3; Psalm 9; Matt 22
- ☐ Isaiah 4-6; Matt 23
- ☐ Micah 1-4; Psalm 10; Matt 24
- ☐ Micah 5-7; Matt 25

Week 34

- ☐ Isaiah 7-10; Psalm 22; Matt 26
- ☐ Isaiah 11-13; Psalm 118; Matt 27

- ☐ Isaiah 14-16; Matt 28
- ☐ Isaiah 17-19; Psalm 62; 1 Corinthians 1
- ☐ Isaiah 20-22; 1 Cor 2

Week 35

- ☐ Isaiah 23-25; 1 Cor 3
- ☐ Isaiah 26-29; Psalm 65; 1 Cor 4
- ☐ Isaiah 30-32; 1 Cor 5
- ☐ Isaiah 33-35; 1 Cor 6
- ☐ 2 Chr 28; 2 Kings 17; Psalm 66; 1 Cor 7

Week 36

- ☐ 2 Chr 29-31; 1 Cor 8
- ☐ 2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chr 32; Psalm 67; 1 Cor 9
- ☐ Isaiah 36-37; Psalm 123; 1 Cor 10
- ☐ 2 Kings 20; Isaiah 38-40; Psalm 68; 1 Cor 11
- ☐ Isaiah 41-44; 1 Cor 12

Week 37

- ☐ Isaiah 45-48; 1 Cor 13
- ☐ Isaiah 49-52; Psalm 69; 1 Cor 14
- ☐ Isaiah 53-55; Psalm 128; 1 Cor 15
- ☐ Isaiah 56-59; Psalm 70; 1 Cor 16
- ☐ Isaiah 60-63; 2 Cor 1

Week 38

- ☐ Isaiah 64-66; 2 Cor 2
- ☐ 2 Kings 21; 2 Chr 33; Psalm 71; 2 Cor 3
- ☐ Nahum; Psalm 149; 2 Cor 4
- ☐ 2 Kings 22-23; Psalm 73; 2 Cor 5
- ☐ 2 Chr 34-35; 2 Cor 6

Week 39

- ☐ Habakkuk; 2 Cor 7
- ☐ Zephaniah; Psalm 74; 2 Cor 8
- ☐ Jeremiah 1-4; Psalm 130; 2 Cor 9
- ☐ Jer 5-7; Psalm 75; 2 Cor 10
- ☐ Jer 8-10; 2 Cor 11

Week 40

- ☐ Jer 11-13; 2 Cor 12
- ☐ Jer 14-16; Psalm 76; 2 Cor 13
- ☐ Jer 17-20; James 1
- ☐ Jer 22, 23, 26; Psalm 77; James 2
- ☐ Jer 25, 35, 36, 45; Psalm 133; James 3

Week 41

- ☐ Jer 27, 28, 29, 34; James 4
- ☐ Jer 37, 39, 40; Psalm 79; James 5
- ☐ Jer 30-33; 1 Peter 1
- ☐ Jer 38, 39, 52; 1 Peter 2
- ☐ 2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chr 36; Psalm 126; 1 Peter 3

Week 42

- ☐ Lamentations; Psalm 137; 1 Peter 4
- ☐ Obadiah; Jer 40-42; Psalm 147; 1 Peter 5
- ☐ Jer 43, 44, 46; 2 Peter 1
- ☐ Jer 47, 48, 49; Psalm 80; 2 Peter 2
- ☐ Jer 50-51; 2 Peter 3



COVID-19, Suffering and Christ

Andrew Millsom, member of GiST Team

Stock image: Lightstock

The COVID-19 pandemic has been described as a once in one hundred year event.¹ And while in Australia we've been spared the large numbers of deaths that have happened overseas, the impact on people here is still significant.

For one, we're being exposed to much more death than we're used to seeing, if only on our TV screens and news feeds. At the peak, 800 people were dying each day in Italy, 700 per day in the UK, and 2,000 per day in the US. There have now been more deaths in the US from COVID-19 than in the whole of the Vietnam war.

Moreover, our health professionals (who are used to seeing death more than most people) are being exposed to the possibility of catching a deadly virus more than even they are used to. Currently, 1 in 72 people who've contracted COVID-19 in Australia have died;² it may not sound like a lot, but I suspect this statistic would seem pretty scary if you're the one being exposed. In countries where the outbreak has been much worse than here, health care workers have made up a significant proportion of infections e.g. 9% in Italy.³

In addition, those with pre-existing medical conditions, especially respiratory conditions (like my wife) are suddenly faced with the possibility of dying much sooner than anticipated. It's a strange feeling to have it dawn on you that if this thing goes south you might not be on this earth for very much longer.

¹ "This is a once-in-100 year type event, we haven't seen this sort of thing in Australia since the end of the first World War, but together we are of course up to this challenge." [Australian PM Scott Morrison] <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/18/australia/coronavirus-covid-19-update-australia-intl-hnk/index.html> (All articles accessed 13 May 2020)

² <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-current-situation-and-case-numbers>

³ The International Council of Nurses reports that in Italy, health care workers make up 9% of COVID-19 cases. <https://www.icn.ch/news/high-proportion-healthcare-workers-covid-19-italy-stark-warning-world-protecting-nurses-and>

And then there are the economic impacts. I was talking to one of the owners of my local coffee shop in late April and I asked him how he was going. "Stressed" was the reply. JobKeeper is great, but he's had to pay all their staff the \$1,500 per fortnight for the first month before JobKeeper kicks in, while not having work for most of them to do. He and his wife still have to pay full rent on their premises—all while smiling and serving takeaway coffee to people like me.

While the suffering caused by this pandemic could have been much worse, we're not used to being exposed to suffering on a scale like this.

Suffering and Aussie culture⁴

What compounds the impact for us though, is that as a culture, we're not as well equipped for dealing with suffering as perhaps we should be.

Tim Keller puts it this way: 'we are more shocked and undone by suffering than were our ancestors. Westerners are peculiarly traumatised by suffering.'⁵ Most cultures over time have accepted suffering as painful yet meaningful in light of life beyond death.

The common non-religious view in our culture though says that there is no greater story that extends beyond our lives, nor any information available from outside humanity about the significance of life and suffering. There is no sense of living in awe before a god of some kind. The only reality is the material world, and life is mostly about finding health, safety, happiness and fulfilment in this life.

⁴ Note what follows in this and the next section borrows heavily from GiST's issues paper 'The Gospel and Voluntary Assisted Dying'. You can find this on the GiST website at <http://www.gist.org.au/the-gospel-and-voluntary-assisted-dying/>

⁵ Tim Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, Riverhead Books: USA, 2013.

Indeed, forty years ago anthropologist Phillip Reiff observed that Western culture was morphing into a 'therapeutic society' in which, in the absence of any greater spiritual context, the highest goal of life is to maximise pleasure and minimise pain.⁶

This means for many people in our Aussie culture, there is no purpose in suffering. It is not an opportunity or a test or a step on a path, it carries no meaning within a greater story of our lives.

Dying and Aussie culture

Moreover, in our Aussie culture death is so terrifying that we typically do everything we can to avoid being confronted by it.

We rarely see people die. In modern Australia, death usually happens in hospitals and nursing homes rather than at home, and it is generally professionals who see and touch the body. Funerals too are becoming more and more upbeat (and sometimes coffin-less) memorials or celebrations, in which talk of death and eternity has been replaced by a sharing of memories.

However, for many in our community, the *process* of dying has come to hold even greater fear than death itself. We fear the pointless suffering of death even more than we fear death itself.

The suffering faced by people on account of COVID-19 demands our compassion, both to do what we can to relieve it *and* to gently point people to a better way of coping with it—a way shaped by the Gospel.

Jesus and suffering

Jesus shows us that suffering *can* be meaningful and full of hope if our story is connected to God's bigger story.

On the night before he was to suffer at the hands of the Roman authorities and be crucified, Jesus confronted his heavenly Father in prayer about his suffering. The famous words he prayed: "*Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup [of suffering] away from me!*" (Mark 14:36) was an anguished prayer from one who had no desire to suffer as he was about to.

Yet Jesus also knew that the story of his life was intimately connected to God's bigger story (or plan) for the world, and that this plan was good. And so he finished his prayer with the words, "*Yet not what I will, but what you will!*" Trusting that God's plan is good allowed Jesus to take comfort that his suffering was not meaningless; in fact, Jesus' suffering was the most meaningful act in history.

Jesus' death holds such meaning because it deals with the root cause of suffering. How Jesus' death deals with suffering is a story on its own, a story about how through his death Jesus assuaged God's rightful anger at human sin, and made possible the renewal of both human beings and the created world (universe) we live in. A renewal which will eliminate suffering in that renewed world forever.

⁶ Philip Reiff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, University of Chicago Press, 1987.

The point is that Jesus was able to submit to his heavenly Father in the Garden of Gethsemane because he was connected to, and trusted in the goodness of that 'bigger story' his heavenly Father was weaving. And so his suffering was still painful, but it was anything but meaningless.

Suffering and us

The apostle Paul tells us that same logic applies to us who follow Jesus. He says, in a verse that's almost as famous as Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him.*" Why? Because, "*those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son*". (Romans 8:28-29)

Just before these verses Paul has been talking about the bigger story: of how Jesus' death makes possible the renewal of human beings and all creation (8:1-17), and how the creation itself 'groans' as in the pains of childbirth while it waits for this renewal, a groaning that's matched inwardly in those who follow Jesus. (v22-23)

What Paul is saying then (v28-29) is that those who follow Jesus have their lives connected to the bigger story. Because the renewal he's been talking about starts now, with God using everything that happens to Christians (even their sufferings) to renew them in their character; or as Paul puts it, to 'conform [them] to the image of His Son'.

And this means that all of life, even our suffering, *can* be meaningful if we trust in Jesus. Because all of life, even our suffering, contributes to the story God is weaving in our lives to renew us into the image of Christ. And to the bigger story of the world God is weaving our smaller stories into.

To be sure, suffering for Christians is still painful, but it's no longer meaningless.

Back to the coffee shop

This is great for me as I follow Jesus. But what about my local coffee shop owners?

To be honest, explaining all this to them in the context of a short conversation in my local coffee shop is almost impossible!

But I hope in the context of a developing friendship, they will see the hope and stability being connected to God's bigger story brings, not only in my life, but in the lives of other Christians they know. And when the time comes for me to give them an answer for the hope within me (1 Peter 3:15), knowing God's bigger story will give me a story to tell them which is better than the one they've been living by.



Mark of Grace

Ben Swift, author of the book *Beyond the Fish Sticker* and escapethebox.blog

Stock image: Unsplash

Theologian Karl Barth who when asked after a lifetime of theological research and contemplation, “What have you learned?” answered, “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so”. But does this seemingly simple response provide a satisfactory answer? It certainly feels like we need something beyond the playful words of a man simply wishing to give a light-hearted response rather than wading in too deep? But maybe Barth’s answer is more profound than we think. If we delve below the surface just a little, we just might find that God has been revealing this simple answer biblically from cover to cover—a message of grace.

Lately, while reading the Bible, I’ve been amazed at the places God has revealed His love for His little image bearers. These lie at the heart of stories I’ve heard a hundred times over and yet, somehow, bring out truths that have been patiently waiting for the next layer of the onion to be peeled back. Perhaps this is what all Christians experience as they journey from milk to solid food?

I wonder how long it took Martin Luther, when he first encountered ‘grace’ while reading Romans—an encounter that sparked the Protestant Reformation—to realise that God’s message of grace could be traced back to the beginning? While Paul makes it clear in his letters that God offers people His profound gift of grace through what Christ achieved on the cross, there are perhaps less obvious pictures of God’s grace being painted through the ancient brush strokes of Old Testament writings.

To understand this, let’s take a journey through the pages of biblical history to the story of Cain and Abel.

The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it”. (Genesis 4:4b-7)

While we might be tempted to wonder if our lives align more closely with Abel’s than with Cain’s in God’s sight, the truth is, sin not only desires to have us all, but entwines itself through the entire heart of humanity, and no one in their own power is capable of mastering it.

As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one, there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God”. (Romans 3:10)

Having lashed out in an act of sibling rivalry that continues to stifle peace amongst people and nations to this very day, Cain spills the blood of his brother; his poisoned heart pumping sin through his veins.

This famous act of violence through which Cain becomes the instrument of death is not the focal point of the story. Interestingly, it is at the point following the slaying of his brother that Cain fears separation from his Creator and the inevitable death this brings; the same consequence of sin his underserving brother suffered at his hands.

Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear”. (Genesis 4:13)

And isn’t this the same for all of us? Who can bear the thought of being separated from the only one capable of protecting us from death? Surely no human being with self-awareness is immune to the constant reality of evil and death in the world. Isn’t it true that we struggle ceaselessly in our pursuit for safety, comfort and the avoidance of growing old? Like a mirror, Cain reflects both our need for God and our inability to present Him with a righteous life pleasing to Him.

There is only one solution and surprisingly it’s Cain’s story that first shows us the way.

Just as Luther recognised grace as our only hope, Cain knew his only hope of a guaranteed protection from death’s ultimate sting was God’s grace and so he pleads with Him.

“Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me”. (Genesis 4:14)

God’s response to Cain is one that sets the scene for His message of grace, a promise that re-emerges time and again throughout the Scriptures; a promise that we are called to live under.

Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. (Genesis 4:15)

Cain’s story has much to teach us about ourselves, and God’s mercy and great love. Humanity, both individually and collectively longs for peace, but continues to struggle with sibling rivalry. Our hearts remain war zones as our offerings before God continue to be tainted by the sin that crouches at our door. But God, in His mercy, offers us hope in His grace. In bearing the mark of Cain—a mark sealed in the precious blood of Christ—we can live under the promise of God’s protection from ultimate death and enter His eternal rest.



Dave & Kathy Thurston

Children: Lucy, James & Victoria

Position: Ministry Development Coordinators with the Committee on Ministry Resourcing (CMR)

What excites you most about working at the Presbyterian Church of Queensland (PCQ)?

We see that the Christian church, worldwide and local, currently stands at another important crossroad in its history: will it be the faithful community of God teaching and living out faith in the Lord Jesus Christ or will it be absorbed by the culture it exists in, being shaped by the world instead of God's Word?

The PCQ stands in a healthy place to be the former with God's help; having a theological basis that is a wonderful foundation, a structure that upholds good processes and a recent heritage that has preserved a desire for Godly ministry. This is what excites us about working for PCQ at this point in time in the denomination.

Why did you choose this work?

We have been in pastoral ministry in the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales for 33 years; for a short time in rural NSW; and the rest of the time in two church plants in Sydney. We loved our time caring for a congregation, week in and week out, teaching the Bible in the context of people's personal lives, encouraging people to grow in their love for Jesus, and caring for one another through the seasons of life.

Throughout the last 25 of those years we have enjoyed hosting theological students at our church, getting to know them and being involved in their 'on the job' training. This led to more formal training in mentoring, which eventually led to us praying about how we could use this passion beyond parish life.

Living Church (Creek Road) invited us to Brisbane to work with young couples in their first parishes, and with the revitalising of their congregations through partnership with Church2Church. That work has transitioned into the ministry development roles within CMR.

In what way has God changed you the most significantly?

We both became Christians as teenagers in the same Presbyterian Church in Epping, Sydney, but we had come from church families, so the immediate changes were superficial. Then—in those formative young adult years—through wonderful Bible teaching at our church and university; serving on Beach Mission; and the influence of Godly people in our lives, God shaped us into people who didn't just believe in Jesus as our Saviour, but also wanted to live with Him at the centre of our lives. This has been our desire ever since.

What were you doing prior to your current role?

Since becoming a Christian, Dave wanted to lead a church and his ancient history studies at university were good preparation for Moore Theological College. Kathy worked as a lawyer in rural NSW, and then in conveyancing in Sydney for 25 years.

What do you hope to achieve in this role?

Our goal is to help pastors and their wives through one to one mentoring, to love God, each other and their churches well. Mentoring also encourages them to lead their churches from a firm identity in Christ, and supports them while they find their feet in ministry, or perhaps transition to a new stage in ministry. We are also trained in Church Consultancy tools, which enables leaders to develop strategies and skills in growing healthy church communities that effectively share and live the Gospel.

What social issue concerns you the most? (in Australia)

Kathy: it is the cycle of poverty, that most significantly affects children and their development, leading to the huge hurts associated with anxiety and depression, loss of educational opportunities and all the social consequences of a weakened family unit. Jesus said that there will always be the poor, but a loving church community can supply their needs, and reverse the consequences for those suffering in this way.

Dave: our culture has become 'choked' by fear and anxiety; unable to listen, debate and differ, with civility and respect. This plays out in our lives, marriages and families. God's people are called to face their fears in the shadow of the cross, and then to demonstrate a new way of being healthy and fruitful despite our culture's toxicity.

What is your favourite book in the Bible and why?

Kathy: Philippians. There are many wonderful passages, but primarily God has challenged me through Paul's desire to lay aside all the worldly qualifications that he had based his value on, to pursue the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord". (3:8)

Dave: Paul's letter to the Ephesians, a letter that teaches us to see God's loving presence in Christ at work in us now, and in the world right before us.

When are you happiest?

Kathy: being surrounded by God's beautiful creation.

Dave: reading a good book.

If you had one day all to yourself, how would you spend it?

Our perfect day together is breakfast with family or friends, a walk, preferably by the sea and time to read and pray.



The Hall family, David, Sharyn & Matilda (centre) and Matilda's Great Grandmother, Erica Ormand Elder.

Baptism of Matilda Margaret Hall

5 January 2020

David and Sharyn Hall presented their young daughter, Matilda Margaret to be baptised at St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Spring Hill. Most of David's old Sunday School and fellowship class were there to give support on this special occasion.

Matilda is part of the 5th generation of this family to be baptised at St Paul's. Her great, great grandfather, Robert Elder, was the first in the family to be baptised in 1895, with the Elder family being early residents in Spring Hill.

An impromptu reunion of the old Sunday School class with their old teachers following the service was an extra highlight.



100 Years Filled with God's Purpose: Dr Stan Mellick

Stan first joined St Paul's as an elder from Alderley Presbyterian Church in the mid-1970s and was inducted as an elder at St Paul's on 24 April 1977.

The following is a tribute to his blessing of 100 years filled with God's purpose. Sources of information have been provided by Stan and his wife Sally, and congregational members, as well as from information available online.

When did you first become a Christian?

Not quite like Paul on the road to Damascus! I learned my prayers at my mother's knee, went to kindergarten in old Park Church in the 1930s, then to the Sunday School. There, I learned Bible passages by heart (I still remember some of them), and progressively, the whole of the Catechism. I think it true to say I was 'God-aware' from an early age and grew in knowledge of Him.

What experiences have you had in your Christian life?

During the war and the battle for Salamaua, I went for a quick wash in a nearby creek and heard with joy

the sound of natives singing hymns upstream, which came drifting down to me.

I served in the Army in World War II for six years as a young adult, accompanied by a small Moffat's New Testament. Post-war I read and studied Scofield's Bible—still in print! Its explanations and footnotes were like a torch. It gave me more understanding than any teacher or minister ever did. I still have it, tattered and in need of rebinding. Wider and deeper reading followed. From it came awareness beyond expectation.

Why did you come to St Paul's?

I was grateful to Rev Ron Pashen, its minister, for interring my father's ashes in the columbarium. I was advised by at least one minister not to go to St Paul's as it was 'moribund' (on the verge of extinction), but I ignored it, otherwise I would have been in the Uniting Church!

What contributions have you made to the ministry at St Paul's?

I started Friends of St Paul's, not just as a Back-to-St Paul's get together, but as an outreach opportunity requiring support by visitations to rekindle interest in our former people in Christianity and St Paul's.

Between 1982 and 1999, I became Chairman of St Paul's Restoration Task Force and the Trust, which I formed. I recruited Lance Schroder, Bob Bunker and Robin Murcott to help me—a splendid team—who did much, and without whom St Paul's would not be standing today.

How did you and the other elders reach out to the congregation and Spring Hill community?

Firstly, the congregation was small and had few elders. I waited until I was better known before asking to be elected to the Session. This happened by being patient and friendly to people. Then next it was courteous to help build on Ron Pashen's work before anyone could reach out anywhere.

So, reach out to Spring Hill?

That unavoidably reveals unawareness of how many poor inactive people the minister had to work with, as well as the history of the area. There were those who had come here for many years—good people—Presbyterians of the old style, who came to worship from near and far, and then went home. The church was flat out reaching these people with their elders let alone a lower income population, who in some cases constituted dangerous people. The church yard was a 'no go' area after dark.

Art shows at the church were frequently organised for occasional Friday nights, which brought in scores of people; book sales were held in the church grounds on 'Spring Hill Days'; progressive dinners were held in people's homes; and packed ANZAC and Remembrance Day services took our influence further afield. This showed the calibre of those involved.

How has the role of elder changed since you first accepted the position?

The role of the ruling elder has never really changed since the Church divided the elders into teaching and ruling. This of course, is the basis of Presbyterianism, and from which I dared to assume an authoritative voice in the Church's affairs and procedures.

As I recall, during my years in the Church, elders weren't regularly being instructed about their responsibilities or being provided with reading matter to inform them. For my part, I ran special congregational courses in other subjects at St Paul's, joined on occasions by Rev Hector Dunne.

How have the demographics changed since you first came to St Paul's?

Demographics? I presume you mean the population of the Spring Hill area. To understand this question one has to know that over the years there are

three cycles to apply. They are, in order, change, decay and renewal.

Spring Hill, Wickham Terrace and Ann Street once supported four Presbyterian churches. My wife Sally's grandfather was a minister of the Valley church in the early 1900s, and Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. Many Presbyterians were brought out in the C19th on a ship called *Fortitude* by the firebrand, Rev Dunmore Lang.

Over the years though, the area became moribund, and church membership for various reasons declined. In recent years the area has revived. Hence the change, decay, renewal cycle.

How do you see St Paul's reaching out into the future?

Only those working in outreach can hazard an answer, and I'm not one of them. There are too many factors to consider.

Can you share some short stories about your work with your team/s in restoring the church buildings?

There are many, of course, but this is one: The stone mason working on the city's Anglican Cathedral wanted me to climb up with him to see their work in progress, and to point out how they coped with unexpected breaks in the stone by modifying the stone work as unnoticeably as possible, leaving the changed stone block there.

Another story was when the cross on the rear of our church roof was being restored, we didn't know whether the hands of the cross extended beyond the stone circle or not. I decided to keep them in the circle, and hopefully change it if we ever discovered otherwise.

Can you share some stories about your work with the Presbyterian Church outside of St Paul's, including your work with St Andrew's Hospital?

Some of the work I did was taking services in the Baptist Church at Enoggera and our local church in which I was an elder. I was also the Sunday School Superintendent, Editor of our church paper and commissioned by the Presbyterian Church State Assembly as a lay preacher.

The following are stories of Stan's ministry:

Wider Presbyterian Community

From 1958 to 1975 Stan was the Assembly Elder representative for the congregation at Alderley and some country congregations around Laidley as needed.

From 1959 to 1960, he served as a member of the Board of Finance of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.

Presbyterian Church of Queensland's Christian Education Committee

From 1963 to 1970, he served as Convener of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland Christian Education Committee as well as on its (separate) Education Committee which was concerned with general oversight of the Boards of Scots College, Warwick; Fairholme Girls School Toowoomba; and schools of the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association: Clayfield College, Somerville House, Brisbane Boys College and Sunshine Coast Grammar.

Stan comments, "In hindsight I can see how wrong the educationists were in devising their new ways of teaching in Sunday School. If their efforts had been more effective, we would have fuller congregations now, but where are they? Of course, the non-experts stayed silent out of respect for them but...here we are".

Presbyterian Church Social Services Committee

From 1972 to 1975 Stan was Convener of the Presbyterian Church Social Services Committee administering the Chelmer Handicapped Children's Home, *Hopetoun*; St. Michael's Aged People's Homes; Unmarried Mother's Home; and foster children homes.

Stan says, "The work of the Social Services Committee involved my visiting the children's home somewhere out Toowong way. One little girl grabbed my leg and hung on while I tried to walk. Then a little boy grabbed the other, looked up at me and said, "Do you love me too?" I bent down, picked him up, hugged him and said, "yes I do" whereupon another little boy grabbed my leg as well, and I walked around doing the inspection with three small children hanging on!".

Grace College Council

Between 1981 and 1992, Stan was a member of Grace College Council at the University of Queensland, and Chairman from 1986 to 1992.

St Andrew's Hospital, Spring Hill, Brisbane

From 1965 to 1988 Stan was a member on the Board of Governors, St Andrew's Hospital, Brisbane. His links with the hospital extend back more than 50 years.

He shares, "I remember attending a meeting at St Andrews Hospital where we decided to build the first big extension and interest rates were about 18% per annum. The problem was that if we waited, costs would increase. If we went ahead, there would be an extra million or so on the overdraft, which was somewhat frightening at that time. We had, had meetings before, but deferred the decision. This time we had to decide. Silence reigned supreme!

Finally, I said, 'Building will never be cheaper, I move that we proceed'. The motion was carried".

Comments from members of St Paul's about Stan

Since Stan's arrival at St Paul's, his Christian life and discipleship has been a beacon to many in our congregation, mentoring our young adults in their studies, finding ways to resource what has been needed, serving our congregation through various roles.

Mr Viv Kitt, who recently retired as Session Clerk, has said that when he was appointed in September 1995, "Stan mentored me in so many ways during my term as Session Clerk, particularly in the early days as I was very new to the eldership. In 1998, Stan assumed the position of Session Clerk for a year with myself (Viv Kitt) acting as his Deputy".

An Elders' Retreat was conducted at Grace College in November 1996 and Stan was instrumental in preparing the various sessions for discussion. In October 1999, Stan assisted in preparing a further retreat, which was held at Emmanuel College.

For every challenge over many years, Stan has managed to find a way to resource an alternate pathway, both within our church and the St Paul's Restoration Trust. He lobbied for greater acknowledgement for the role of women in ministry, just as women were active in the early church. Stan comments, "I stepped down as Session Clerk, especially to appoint Erica Ormand as Clerk when the General Assembly of Australia was held in St Paul's, and she therefore had to sit on the right of the Moderator-General at the Communion service. As a result some ministers walked out! A bit naughty of me, but I was making the point that in the early church women held office by leading in prayer. The catacombs in Rome have a painting showing this happening".

As Session Clerk, Stan was instrumental with the other elders in setting up our Pastorium to give women a role in the church. He wrote the Charter pertaining to membership of the Pastorium. He was later also involved in the appointment of Deaconess, Dianne Yates.

Stan also successfully lobbied for the appointment of a Church Archivist.

As member of the Session, Stan was also instrumental in the calling process of our previous minister, Rev Andrew Gardiner and family to St Paul's from Scotland.

One of Stan's personal awards, presented in 2005 was an Order of Australia—Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)—General Division for service to the community, particularly through the restoration of St Paul's Presbyterian Church, and to Australian cultural studies.

News | Presbytery of North Queensland

Earlier this year the Presbytery of North Queensland gathered together for their first meeting of 2020 in the town of Cardwell—midway between Townsville and Cairns.

Members travelled from Ayr and Townsville in the South; and Cairns, Gordonvale and Atherton in the North; plus Richard Riley, who came across from Darwin.

It was our pleasure to welcome new members, Elder Ben Dixon, Home Missionary at St Andrews, Townsville; Elder Robert Handicott from John Knox, Townsville; and Chris Gargan Assistant Minister at Willows, Townsville.

One highlight of our meeting was the licensing of Lindsay Foster and Chris Gargan. Both men had completed their studies at Queensland Theological College, and fulfilled their trials for licence as a minister. It was a privilege to be able to perform the licensing with the whole presbytery present.

The Moderator of Presbytery, Elder Ian Putt asked them the following questions:

Do you believe the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only rule of faith and practice?

Do you own and accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, as amended by the General Assembly and read in the light of the Declaratory Statement contained in the Basis of Union adopted by this Church on the 24th day of July 1901, as an exhibition of the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures and as a confession of your faith; and do you engage firmly and constantly to adhere thereto, and to the utmost of your power to assert, maintain and defend the same?

Do you own and accept the purity of worship as practised in this Church?

Do you own the Presbyterian form of government to be founded on the Word of God and agreeable thereto; and do you promise that through the grace of God you will firmly and constantly adhere to, and to the utmost of your power, in your station, assert, maintain and defend the same?

Do you adhere to your acceptance of the Call of this congregation, to exercise among them the office of Ruling Elder?

Do you engage through Divine Grace to discharge with diligence and faithfulness the various duties of your office, watching over the flock showing yourself a pattern of good works, and giving a conscientious attendance on the meetings of Session, Presbytery, and Assembly, when duly called so to do?

All these things you profess and promise through grace, as you shall be answerable at the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Rev Andrew Richardson preached a message of challenge and encouragement from the Word of God.

Both Lindsay and Chris signed the formula which says, "I own and accept the Subordinate Standard of this Church, with the explanations given in the Articles contained in the Declaratory Statement as an exhibition of the sense in which I understand the Holy Scriptures, and as a confession of my faith. I further own the purity of worship practised in this Church and the Presbyterian government thereof to be founded on the Word of God and agreeable thereto, and I promise that through the grace of God I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and to the utmost of my power shall, in my station, assert, maintain, and defend the doctrine, worship, and government of this Church".

Those present laid their hands on them while Andrew prayed, and then all there gave the *right hand of fellowship* (see Galatians 2:9).



L to R: Ross Davies [Gordonvale/Babinda]; Robert Handicott [John Knox]; Ben Dixon [St Andrews]; Greg Watt [John Knox]; Jason Smart [Willows]; Simon Allery [Willows]; Richard Riley [Darwin]; Chris Gargan [Willows]; Paul Compton [Willows – obscured in background]; Gavin Henderson [Burdekin]; Lindsay Foster [Tablelands]; Peter Davies [Cairns partly obscured in background]; Ron Lyons [Cairns]; Ian Putt [North Shore]; Andrew Millsom [North Shore]; Andrew Richardson [Cairns]; Phil Cory [Tablelands].

Kids Weekender North

Kids Weekender North 2020 was a blast! We followed the clues throughout the Bible to solve the mystery of the man who defeated sin and death. Praise God that the Good News of Jesus was proclaimed so clearly across the weekend. Camps are always a highlight of the year for those involved, with many North Brisbane churches coming together to see young people hear this Good News. So far, this has been our only camp that has proceeded this year due to COVID-19. Please join us in praying for the young people across our State as they grapple with this, just as we all are, that they might draw near to God in this time, trusting in Him always.



MEET *the* CANDIDATES

These are just some of the students studying at Queensland Theological College as Presbyterian Candidates.



Troy Wilkins

Church: Graceville Presbyterian Church

Supervisor: Rev Rohan Pieris

Year at QTC: Third Year

Due to finish studies: 2021

Recently learnt at QTC:

To quote C. S. Lewis, "To what will you look for help if you will not look to that which is stronger than yourself?". I have learnt even more so that I must always keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, my Saviour, my King, and the place where my identity comes from.

Looking forward to in ministry: A life as a shepherd: loving, leading, caring, protecting and teaching God's people, wherever He sends me.



Sam Wheeler-Smith

Church: Southside Presbyterian Church

Supervisor: Rev Ross Wilson

Year at QTC: Third Year

Due to finish studies: 2021

Recently learnt at QTC: A deeper understanding and appreciation of the incredible step God took in Jesus by him coming toward us and taking on himself, our flesh, so that he could restore humanity through his own death and resurrection.

Looking forward to in ministry: Being able to practically apply what I've been learning at QTC within the church, and because I've experienced so many eye-opening truths about God through studying His word at QTC, I'm really excited to help others have those same truths (and more) revealed to them too, and to share in that joy with God's people, wherever God has chosen to place me and my family after college.



Steve Young

Church: Kenmore Presbyterian Church

Supervisor: Rev Steve Blencowe

Year at QTC: Fourth Year

Due to finish studies: Finishing his MDiv, then moving into Candidacy

Recently learnt at QTC: I've learned how much God, although being infinitely transcendent, is intimately involved in the entire history of his church, even today. This gives me great confidence for the future of the Australian Church, even if there are some daunting challenges ahead.

Looking forward to in ministry: Seeing people's lives shaped and moulded by the Gospel as God's Word is taught and lived. There is nothing more exciting and rewarding than seeing people grow in confidence and assurance, to a life lived boldly for Christ.



Stephen Hodges

Church: Moorooka Presbyterian Church

Supervisor: Mr Geoff Tacon

Year at QTC: Second Year

Due to finish studies: 2022

Recently learnt at QTC: The beauty of God's Word in the original languages.

Looking forward to in ministry: Growing in love and knowledge of God with others.



Emily Andrews (Deaconess Candidate)

Church: Christ Central Presbyterian Church

Supervisor: Rev Garnet Swann

Year at QTC: Second Year

Due to finish studies: 2021

Recently learnt at QTC: I've learnt so much that it is hard to choose. But one thing I've been struck by recently is the constant reminder of how God has graciously saved us, and given us His Spirit to help us through the ups and downs of life with Him, as we look forward to our final adoption in Him.

Looking forward to in ministry: So much, but in particular, walking alongside women, encouraging them as they read God's Word and grow through it as disciples of Christ.



Rob Nicholls

Church: Central Church, Ipswich

Supervisor: Rev Scott Muir

Year at QTC: Third Year

Due to finish studies: 2021

Recently learnt at QTC: The one thing that I've learnt is to slow down, not get distracted and to enjoy soaking up God's Word in this time, and in being confident that God is leading me and sanctifying me to be more like Him.

Looking forward to in ministry: I'm really looking forward to a life of community with fellow saints, equipping them for the ministry of the Gospel and sharing life with a new church family.



Luke Doyle

Church: Ann Street Presbyterian Church

Supervisor: Rev Linden Fooks

Year at QTC: First Year

Due to finish studies: 2024

Recently learnt at QTC: Working through the Old Testament I am constantly struck by God's grace and faithfulness.

Looking forward to in ministry: Serving God's church in pointing people to Jesus.



Queensland
Theological College



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 1 Clarence Street, Burwood NSW 2134 (02) 8073 7490 national@apwm.org.au

TALUA, CYCLONE HAROLD & REBUILDING



On 12th April Vanuatu was struck by Harold, a category 5 cyclone, meaning it was severe.

Talua is a priority for APWM as it suffered extensive damage and has closed until May 2021. An initial gift of \$5,000 has been sent to assist the college.

Our Moderator-General, the Rev Dr Peter Barnes, has launched an appeal for funds. At the time of writing we have received \$45,000 in gifts and we praise God for such generosity. The rebuilding work will cost up to \$100,000. Any gifts received beyond that will go toward repairing church buildings.

If you would like to view a video of the damage please go to APWM's Vimeo page

www.vimeo.com/410143623

HOW TO DONATE

Direct Deposit

Bank: Westpac
Account Name: Australian Presbyterian World Mission
BSB: 032 260
Account Number: 151207
and mark your gift 'Harold'.
Please email finance@apwm.org.au so we can send a receipt.

Cheque

Please send cheques to:
APWM National
1 Clarence St
Burwood NSW 2134
(Gifts are not tax deductible)
Please note, if there are any excess funds, these will be separately tracked and used for future cyclone relief in Vanuatu.

COVID 19 & RAISING A PARTNERSHIP TEAM



Rob and El Falls are currently seeking to build a team of partners as they head to teach at the Talua Theological Training Institute, Vanuatu, in 2021. Normally they would visit churches and Bible study groups to talk about their proposed ministry. Despite COVID 19 they can still 'visit' your church or small group. They write:

During this post-cyclone, mid-COVID crisis, Vanuatu is now more than ever in need of strong pastoral leadership, and support from the Australian Church.

We are in the process of developing a team of partners so that we can serve in God's ministry at Talua.

We would love to join your Bible study or church service or mission committee meeting, via whatever technology you use, to share what God is doing through our brothers and sisters in the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu.

It would be good to discuss with you how you can partner with them (through us) in the difficult, yet strategic, days ahead.

Please contact us through our website:
www.fallsvanuatu.info

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For ten years, women from around South East Queensland have been growing in Christ together at the GROW Women's Conference. This year, the GROW Conference has morphed into GROW Chats 2020—short interviews with local Christian women. Each Saturday from 23 May to 5 September we'll release chats about a chapter of the Bible (Hebrews Chapters 1-4), prayer, songs, books and life in Christ. GROW Chats 2020 is for all women everywhere. You can listen while you walk, work or rest. Then chat to someone in your life about what you hear.

Tune in to GROW Chats 2020 by visiting our website — qcca.org.au/grow/