



Letter #31

15 October 2020

Greetings! Have you often walked in on a conversation between 2 people wondering what on earth has been, or is happening? I had that experience just the other day! These two were chatting and laughing – one was continually saying “thank you” while the other was smiling and responding with words and phrases like. “It’s Ok. Pleasure. All good. Glad things worked out”. They both saw me approaching and neither stopped, as if to say, I want you to hear this! I couldn’t help but ponder what had happened that bought this conversation to this point. I didn’t have to wait long. After a few more minutes one of them left – still obviously very grateful and I sat down with the other (who I went to see) and she laughed and said, “this is what we’re all about.” I was curious! Before I could say anything else, I heard these words, “I went with her (the other person in that conversation) yesterday as she needed to go to the Courts and she was very anxious and concerned about the outcome as it may have impacted on her children. I took her and waited as she went inside. I wasn’t allowed inside so I just waited. In the end I couldn’t stay the whole time but I felt it important that I be with her as much as I could. Today she is excited and grateful because I was prepared to spend that time with her and encourage her to be brave. The outcome was in her favour and we are excited for her – as you would have heard”.

It’s not rocket science is it? It reminds me of arguably one of the most well-known parables told by Jesus – often referred to as “the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10 29 – 37). You all know the story! I guess the challenge comes in the form of our response! The Samaritan took time out of his planned itinerary to assist a man obviously in great need. The need we read about was mostly physical, yet there would have been some emotional, financial and spiritual pain as well I’m sure. He was helped and assisted to gain a new life. It has often plagued my mind – what was the major gift the Samaritan gave this wounded foreigner? Yes, it was surely his capacity to assist and his transport along with his money but perhaps above all it was his ‘presence’. I guess that’s what time often relates to – being present with another person at their point of need! That point when we are prepared to put aside our plans for the betterment of another. Luke refers to it as ‘mercy’. Of course, that parable was told in answer to the question, “Who is my neighbour?” And the last words of Jesus as he shared that story remains a part of our charter – “go and do the same”. That’s what the Church is about! Are we ‘present’ before we offer presents?

## COVID-19

Synod personnel participated with Queensland Heads of Churches in a meeting with Queensland Health recently to discuss the Industry Plan for Places of Worship. This meeting established that:

- Home worship groups and meetings must comply with the Movement and Gathering Public Health Direction and be guided by the COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship.
- Importantly and contrary to the direction last week, this **does not** require the completion of the ‘checklist’ and ‘Statement of Compliance’ to be displayed at the residence whilst home groups / worship is occurring.
- We are now permitted to stand to consume food and drink. However, there is still to be no buffet or self-service of items and physical distancing between people must be maintained.
- Outdoor activities are seen as a lower risk environment than indoor venues.

This is great news – some might say – not before time! Yet let’s be thankful for what we now have.

## CHURCH

In line with the last dot point on the previous page, how might we utilise our outdoor area more effectively? Maybe a monthly 8am service outdoors – under marquees and the tree? Who knows, but it seems that more and more we may need to seriously and prayerfully think about utilising outdoors more than we do??? Are we that reliant on indoor technology that we can't deviate at least occasionally? There are no answers to any of these but it begs some questioning!

Given that we can now stand and eat/drink we have decided to re-introduce a time of fellowship commonly referred to as Morning Tea this Sunday – 18<sup>th</sup> at both our 8am and 10am services! Obviously, any drinks will still need to be served in take away cups/mugs and any food will still need to be individually wrapped or served rather than a 'help yourself' style. While this is still a little cumbersome and perhaps not ideal, it is worth the investment in some time to gain the worth of fellowshiping informally for a period. Given that this is the first time we have been able to do this for over 6 months, **any coffee from the Coffee Hut will be free** to all this weekend only. Of course, if you would prefer instant coffee or tea, that will also be available and will be served!

I want to share with you all the different approach we are trialling in respect to our 10am family. Effective from this weekend we are experimenting with a varied approach each week with a review at the end of November. Here is the summary of what we have come up with:

- ❖ First Sunday of the Month – very similar to what was – ie service inside the church with Communion and message!
- ❖ Second Sunday – Starting the service outside on the grass with some intentional children's worship and activity – singing some of the old Sunday school favourites with actions etc. Children will then be encouraged to either stay outside or move into the CE Room for Children's Church – or perhaps more aptly called Kid's Zone – it may be watching a DVD or some games or ..... If you would like to assist with this, we would love to hear from you! The adults move into the church for some worship and a brief reflection encouraging groups to reflect on what has been said.
- ❖ Third Sunday – Testimony time! We want to hear people's stories. No message as such. But we want to 'create space' (our Vision) to be enthused, enlightened, encouraged and empowered by how God is impacting lives for His glory. I am very excited about this and look forward to getting to know more about all of us. This may well be around tables (maybe inside or out) - more café style! Maybe coffee / tea / cold drink while we chat instead of after??
- ❖ Fourth Sunday – we will meet outdoors in a Park! This will be a week where we want to encourage our friends and neighbours to come along – non threatening, accepting, and invitational. We want to begin to put into practise our call to "go" and be bold as we were challenged last week by Simon. There will be food – most likely a barbeque – because it's the easiest .. And its Aussie!
- ❖ Fifth Sunday – OASIS.

Any visiting guests will be invited on either week one or two.

As stated above – this is a trial. I am excited, though, about the possibilities. Can we all commit this to prayer and let's see what God does amidst us as we try something fresh and very different!

## SOME OTHER NEWS!

### FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Ladies – please note we are ready to reignite our circle of love, laughter and learning together. Re-commencing on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October at 9am in the church. Not sure what's on the agenda but hey it doesn't matter does it. Just come along if you can and enjoy a time of fellowship and please bring a cup or mug from home.

Contact Ruth – 5481 1050 – for any questions or information.

## BIG HEARTS

The countdown is on! Big Hearts will be launched soon seeking to assist in giving some of our folks and others a gift for a Christmas to remember. This has been a great initiative over the last couple of years and promises to be even more so this year with the isolation that many have experienced and in many cases continue to do so.

## SHOEBOXES

I can't say this any better than Helen! "What an achievement last Tuesday to be able to put together those **59 boxes!!** Thank you to all who supported this mission in any way. Please let our people know that we will be able to follow 2 of the boxes to see where they end up. Especially, I want to thank all those who came to help pack. It made things so much easier having a good number to do it". I simply echo Helen's words – thank you, on behalf of the whole church, for your generosity in gifts, money and or time. What an amazing story of mission. 59 boxes – given the year we've had – WOW!

## SYNOD

Next weekend – from Thursday night to Sunday night! Please pray!

## PRESBYTERY / CHAPLAINCY

The next Presbytery meets at Hervey Bay and it is a live-in weekend. Both Jim and I will be attending and as a result will not be with you on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November. I have arranged that Sunday to be Chaplaincy Sunday for us anyway – Joy Mahoney (Chappy at Gympie State High School) will be sharing in both Gympie services and Jacinta Busiko (Chappy at Mary Valley College and Gunalda) will be sharing at Imbil. Both promise to be inspirational times. It would be great to have as many as our space permits turn up to all three...

## **GIVING**

\$3246.40 (incl \$2046.00 in direct deposits). Thank you so much for your faithfulness in your giving.

## **PERSONAL**

Our first open house this Saturday! The house is now listed online both through facebook and the real estate.com web site. Will be fascinating to see what transpires.

**SCRIPTURES** Psalm 103: 7 ♦ Jeremiah 6: 16 ♦ Ephesians 1: 17 ♦ Matthew 19: 13 & 14

*Be Blessed!*

*Dave*

**Rev Dave Thomas**  
15 Red Hill Road Gympie 4570  
Church Email [office@gruc.org.au](mailto:office@gruc.org.au)

**Mobile** 0432 304 474  
**Web** [gruc.org.au](http://gruc.org.au)  
**Phone** (07) 5482 2985

**Email** [davet@gruc.org](mailto:davet@gruc.org)  
**Facebook** [facebook.com/guchurch](https://www.facebook.com/guchurch)  
**Fax** (07) 5482 2608