



2 October 2020

Giddy! Some of you, I'm sure, would have either participated in, or sponsored someone engaged, in a walk-a-thon, or swim-a-thon or some other 'a-thon' as a way of raising funds to support a worthy cause. For about 5 years from 2006, I was a part of about 300 people walking to support School Chaplaincy across the Gold Coast. It was an annual event called "K's 4 Kids" - and was staged mostly along the beach from Main Beach at Southport to Coolangatta. It was a 30km hike - although participants could choose to walk either 10ks or 20ks as well. They just started at the appropriate check-point. I chose to do the full 30ks each year. So what, you may say? Well - I discovered that 30 kilometres is a very long way for the uninitiated and ill-equipped walker. And that was me! I remember the first year thinking that it wasn't that far and it would be easy! I recall several people about 3 months prior to the date, suggesting that I start training and preparing my body for the onslaught. I didn't! I was convinced that as it was not a race I could take my time and that I would complete the distance easily - what on earth was all the fuss about? The day came and I was ready - I looked the real deal - complete with walking shoes, hat and water bottle. And what's more I was enjoying the camaraderie of other folk from various school communities. At 7am the bell sounded and we were off. The plan 'on paper' was that most folk doing the whole course should complete it in 6 hours - an average of 2 hours per 10 kilometres (for you mathematicians - that's an average walking speed of 6 minutes per kilometre or 5 kilometres per hour) - maintained for 6 hours. I took longer than 6 hours and I was a mess at the end. My feet were blistered and sore, and every muscle became stiff to the point that I struggled to walk at all for a few hours after. I remember the pain as I crawled into the car to come home. What a cost for not heeding the voice of those who knew better than I? On reflection I was living a lie! I pretended I knew better than anyone else and I figured I didn't need any preparation and I could just turn up, compete and complete! How wrong I was?

Since that day I have often reflected on how it is so easy for me to fall into the same trap in living the Christian life! What about you? How do you approach the journey that Jesus calls you to daily? How do I? How do we as a part of God's family? Sometimes I think we play the pretend game. We think we can ignore the need to prepare ourselves spiritually for the hurdles of life and just turn up and all will be well. Then we wonder why we hurt and ache when things don't go according to our plan 'on paper'. There is a great one liner that says, "Live each day as if it was your last". If we are in Christ's family of believers, as renewed, restored, and reconciled people, released from the burdens of self-imposed barriers, our last day on this earth is the first day of life with Jesus forever. The challenge for each of us though is that we need to be ready! Really ready! And really ready at all times. We can look the real deal, we can fool some along the way, but the test is in our preparation! So what does the Lord require of us? "To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Paul reminds us to walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls us into His own Kingdom and Glory" (1 Thess. 2: 12). Are we living as fully prepared and ready God-agents?

COVID-19

The stranglehold that this virus has had over Melbourne and other parts of Victoria seems to be finally easing a little. Announcements made during the week have revealed that from 1 October, several northern NSW shires will be open to Queensland, although the border remains closed to most of the state still. Furthermore, while as of today, there are 5 active cases in Queensland, there have been none over the last few days. Good news! The Government has increased the number of people who can gather at venues and events - provided they are outdoors. Outdoor dining, theme parks, zoos and the like can now accommodate more patronage easing the restrictions from one per 4 square metres to one every 2 square metres.

Work on vaccines and other medical aids to assist in effectively dealing with the virus continues. I heard on the news this morning that a Brisbane based company are trialling a 'strip' which, if found to be successful, will speed up the process of discernment regarding the infection. Apparently, it will be similar to the way a pregnancy test works - not that I am any expert on that! It is somewhat reassuring to know that these and other trials are being done.

As followers of Jesus though, our hope is always on Him and His Call on our lives to be people of faith not fear. Our ultimate trust is in Him and His provision. While we thank Him for the work being done around the globe in helping to find ways to control the spread of COVID-19, we are grateful first and foremost for our place in His family.

CHURCH

A month has gone since opening our doors in Gympie. Our early service has seen an average of about 32 attend although specific Sundays have been both higher and lower. Our second service of course has had 2 weeks off and this Sunday we meet to discern together the next steps. Our Imbil family have of course been meeting for some time already and are averaging around the 22 mark, with some fluctuations again on a per Sunday basis. Our experience to date, although way too early to make any long term projections or decisions, seems to be consistent with other churches locally, nationally and internationally. And that is that, generally speaking, numbers are down from pre-covid times a few months back.

It seems, from what I am reading and gleaning from other conversations cross denominationally, that maintaining an online presence is both real and needed. Perhaps we need to rethink what constitutes a growing church. Is it now only numbers who physically attend on a Sunday morning, or growing offerings, as important as both are, or should it be now more, or at least different. This thinking takes us beyond our comfort zone (well it does me anyway) but I suspect that if there is a new norm it will have less to do with physical presence alone and more to do with both a face to face and digital connection! It is for this reason that we have committed to live streaming our services as soon as the relevant equipment arrives. On that subject, we await the lights, switcher, tripod and Apple computer (all ordered) before engaging an electrician to hard wire it all. I am hopeful of commencing in November.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Nomination forms will be available on Sunday in order to facilitate the election of the Leadership Team for the next 12 months. A couple of important notes to bear in mind:

- There are 3 current serving members of the Team who remain on Team, as their term of office doesn't expire until the end of 2021 – these are Rachel Kraak, Judy Ironside and John Edwards.
- Unlike previous years there will only be one form not two! You can nominate someone for either a) Elder only; b) a non Elder – meaning they are on the Team but not as an Elder, or c) both Elder and on team. I hope this will make things much easier.
- We need to elect 5 persons to make up the number of 8 (considered the ideal number – remember that both Ministers are a part of the Team as well).
- Most of the other current serving members (Keith & Ruth Watson, Mitchell Collins, and Ken Ward) can be renominated if they are willing to accept.
- It is wise to also remember that some 'new blood' is encouraged, as is ideally an age, gender and worshipping community balance.
- An election will need to occur at the **AGM (scheduled for 8th November)** regardless of the number nominated.
- All Nomination forms must be received in the office by Sunday 25th October – giving us all 3 weeks to prayerfully consider this important matter in the life of our church going forward.

GLS

I will be attending a one day leadership development course called the Global Leadership Summit next Saturday 10th October. This year like so much that has happened this year, it will be all online although I will be viewing it along with others from other churches at the Church of Christ. There are some great key-note speakers and I am looking forward to learning from them, seeking to put some of the learnings into practice in coming weeks and months.

SHOEBOXES

Just a reminder that the packing of the shoeboxes is happening at the Imbil Church Hall on Tuesday afternoon, 13th Oct, starting at 2.00pm. It is important that you let Helen Ward know (5483 3143) if you are planning to assist.

10AM WORSHIP CREW

Don't forget this Sunday we are gathering for a barbeque / picnic at 10.30am in the park in Echelon Estate – Jones Hill. Apart from some great fellowship and the opportunity to casually connect again in a less formal way, we would love to chat about ideas around the what, when, where, how and why of our future. We need the input of all as we potentially forge new ground and try new things. Your input is needed.

Please BYO chair, a plate of savoury / sweets to share and drinks! Meat, onion, bread, sauce will be supplied.

SIMON RATTRAY

Simon from Project 114 will be with us next Sunday (11th October) to share his passion around the persecuted church. We look forward to him being among us.

PASTORAL CARE

We continue to pray for Noah Collins and his continual recovery from knee surgery last Friday and our prayers continue for Fay Paige and all the family.

We think of Gordon Stennett – who is in SCUH hospital and for Barbara as she awaits results.

Jean Erb – has undergone more tests although as at the time of writing, results are unknown. We pray for her and her family and for positive outcomes.

October is National Mental Health Month across Australia. In Queensland, the theme for 2020 is “Take time for your mental health”. We are very conscious that many are struggling having faced loss of jobs, strained relationships, and resulting loss of self-worth. We pray Lord that you might be their constant companion and their strength during these times.

CONTACT MAGAZINE

The latest edition – Oct → December is out now. Thanks to all those who help each quarter to create this mode of communication and bring it to you.

OFFICE

Cherylie will be on leave next Friday 9th October. So, it would be very helpful if you could RSVP your church attendance for Sunday 11th October by Thursday that week.

GIVING

Giving over the past week has been \$2551.00 (including \$1626.00 in direct deposits) – thank you.

PERSONAL

It's becoming surreal. Our much loved home is on the market. Its sale and all the associated decisions and implications are in God's hands. We would appreciate your prayers!

This Sunday is our wedding anniversary!

SCRIPTURES Exodus 20: 20 ♦ Jonah 2: 9 ♦ John 17: 20 – 23 ♦ 1 Timothy 1: 14 & 15

Be Blessed!

Dave

Rev Dave Thomas
15 Red Hill Road Gympie 4570
Church Email office@gruc.org.au

Mobile 0432 304 474
Web gruc.org.au
Phone (07) 5482 2985

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