



Letter #28

25 September 2020

Hi! If you spoke to any of the folk who know about the ministry of Hope Reins, I am sure they would tell you stories of how horses connect with people in ways that often baffle us. If you speak to Kylie or Ruth, or John Kropp (Valley) or Linda Watt – now living on the family farm at Narangba – they will tell you of the significance and strength of such a horse / human connection. I am not quite sure where I got my love of, and fascination for, all things horses – perhaps it was my Mum who learnt to ride when we were living at South Kolan just north of Bundaberg. Anyway I discovered that despite their size and strength I was drawn to them even though I have never owned one nor have I had occasion to enjoy such a pastime that often. I was riding this particular horse on a farm one afternoon – well not really riding – more like sitting and getting accustomed to each other before we set out on what I was hoping would be a memorable experience. It all seemed to be going well but just as we were ready to head out, my horse reared and threw me off its back. I don't remember landing nor do I remember the next few minutes – apparently I must have blacked out when I hit the turf – and maybe it's just as well! The horse had reared because it sensed danger. It was sometime later, badly bruised and battered and in a degree of pain, that I was told that a snake was coiled under the feet of the horse – the horse rearing woke it up presumably and it slithered off. The owner of the property and of that horse saw it, but allowed it to disappear. While no-one was sure what sort of snake it was, it was thought to be a Brown as they were very common in that area.

On thinking about what happened that day – while it wasn't that clear back then – I began to see that horse very God like. There are a number of similarities, but the one I want to focus on is how the horse knew there was danger imminent before I did or indeed any other person did and he acted to protect all of us. While there may have been an element of risk, he knew that to do nothing was not an option. That horse put me through a bit of discomfort and pain – mostly my pride I suspect – but in doing so he saved me from what may have been a much worse outcome. That is what God does for each of us. He knows what we are going through and knows the potential dangers that are around us before we do. And what He does we sometimes don't like. His answers are not always what we think they should be, but they are always for our growth and development, even if we are unaware of it as we navigate the issue. Naaman did not like the Prophets solution to his request for healing. Dipping in that river would not have been easy for him given his status - his pride would have been severely challenged. Yet once he decided to follow his healing came (2 Kings 5). Are we prepared to accept God's answers even if we don't understand or worse – it gives us some discomfort?

COVID – 19

Border restrictions will ease somewhat from 1st October enabling people from Qld to travel to some of the northern parts of NSW including Ballina, Byron Bay, Lismore and around Glen Innes. The QLD / SA border is now open. This will be welcome news to some but not enough for others. Our prayers still go out to all those impacted with these closures.

Just a reminder about gatherings of people either in homes or in public places. In non-restricted areas such as ours, such gatherings are still limited to a maximum of 30 people. However these limits do not apply to businesses operating under a COVID Safe plan. If your business is operating under a COVID Safe plan, you are not affected by the latest restrictions announced on 22 August 2020 for the Greater Brisbane and Ipswich areas. This includes businesses operating under a COVID Safe Industry Plan, a COVID Safe checklist, COVID Safe Site Specific Plan or COVID Safe Event Plan. You are reminded to ensure that your staff and customers observe social distancing, ensure customer details are retained, and ensure that any staff or customers who are showing any symptoms do not enter your premises. For the purposes of this specific COVID directive, worship spaces should be seen as businesses!

Let's spare some thought and prayer for the folk from England who appear to be in the middle of a second wave?

CHURCH

The Leadership Team met last Tuesday Night for its regular meeting. Here are the highlights:

- We aim to be ordering the majority of the material needed for our livestream project this week. This includes a camera, lights, cables and an Apple Computer (desktop) which will drive the live stream.
- We have shifted the date for the AGM. This was mainly due to the uncertainty that the audit would be finished and the need to allow time for the normal nomination process and the compilation of the annual report. The date now set is **Sunday 8th November at 2pm in the Gympie Church**. Please diary this now and plan if at all possible to be available and present. In line with this, please be at prayer regarding the membership of the new Leadership Team going forward. Nomination forms will be available on 4th October! If you normally write a paragraph for the annual report please endeavour to have that done as soon as possible.
- You may have noticed that new roofs have been completed on 13 Redhill Rd, (house and shed) the small roof above the entry to the church and the workmen are currently working on 19 Redhill Rd. Scaffolding will be erected next Tuesday in preparation for the new roof to the Hall. Obviously, the cost of all this is covered by Insurance.
- Jim is taking a week's study leave next week!
- It has been agreed that my last Sunday as Minister of GRUC will be Sunday 27th December. Sandy and I will be on annual leave from then until we commence at Oxley in Brisbane on 1 February 2021.
- The congregation profile has been completed and was approved on Tuesday Night. Jim will speak to this over the next couple of weeks in both Gympie and Imbil. The document has been well compiled and represents a vibrant missional church to be! Process wise, this profile will be forwarded to presbytery for its comments at its meeting on 8th October before being sent to Placements in Brisbane. Thank you to all who have contributed.
- The JNC membership has almost been resolved. The names of these folk will be made available as soon as possible.
- One of the more significant issues that continues to confront us – wherever we go these days – is what has become known as '**contact tracing**'! The necessity to have your name recorded as you enter with name address phone numbers and the time you entered and time you left. It can be frustrating but it is what needs to be done and is likely to remain current for some time yet. Both the Government and the Church has been and is quite specific around this issue. It is for this reason that it remains critical that you let the office know of your intention to participate in worship on a Sunday from week to week. And should you be able to come and have forgotten to register your intent than it is important that you complete the form that is available at the front of the church.

Please note that over the last 3 weeks we have met, there have been additional seats available within our stated quota! And currently this week is the same! Thank you for your patience and understanding of the 'new normal'.

SHOEBOXES

Helen and her team from Imbil will be packing the shoeboxes on **Tuesday afternoon, 13th Oct, starting at 2.00pm**. A cuppa will likely be served (appropriately) as well. Helen would love some more volunteer support to assist in the packing. If you are available and would like to lend a hand please phone Helen on 5484 3143 to register your intent as appropriate spacing etc needs to be ensured. A huge thank you from Helen and all of us for all the support offered throughout these last few months, both in gifts and financially. We are still hoping for 50 boxes which will be an awesome response.

10AM WORSHIP CREW

Please come along on **Sunday 4th October to 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. Please put it in your diary and plan to be there if at all possible. Your input is valued!

CHILDCARE ASSOCIATION

The AGM for the UCCCA is scheduled for **Monday evening the 19th October starting at 7pm in the church**. It would be great to have a good representation from each of our worshipping communities present to give their visible support to the incredible role they play on our behalf.

SYNOD

Synod convenes next month (October from Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th). Due to COVID we will be meeting via a digital platform. So, while I will be around over those days, I will be in front of a TV screen somewhere – not sure where exactly yet trying my best to participate in as meaningful a way as possible.

SIMON RATTRAY

Simon from Project 114 will be with us in Gympie on Sunday 11th October to share his passion around the persecuted church. Promises to be a great time!

PASTORAL CARE

We continue to remember Fay Paige and all the family during their time of loss.
Please pray for Jean Erb – she headed off to Hospital (SCUH) yesterday for further tests.
Noah Collins undergoes knee surgery today (Friday). Please pray for a positive outcome and a quick recuperative period.

GIVING

\$2321.00 (including \$1051.00 in direct deposits)

PERSONAL

It never rains but it pours. Sandy has been called up now for Jury service! We wait and see!
Last Monday we visited the Oxley manse. And next week our place goes on the market. The fun begins!

SCRIPTURES 2 Kings 6: 16 ♦ Ecclesiastes 12: 13 ♦ John 11: 40 ♦ 2 Thessalonians 1: 11 & 12

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