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**SPRING EDITION**

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# EDITORIAL

A bumper Spring crop of articles in this edition of SALT! It continues to be a challenging and changing world and while our Saint Andrew's community is showing plenty of flexibility and perseverance, it is timely that our Minister, Susan, is writing in this edition about prayer and prayer life.

In our last edition we included a tribute to Elaine Mitchell who passed away early this year. Sadly, Elaine's husband Keith has also passed away and their children, Geoff, Lindsay and Janette, have written a loving tribute to their parents and their long association with Saint Andrew's.

Our oldest member of the congregation, Olive Ravenscroft, has also sadly passed away at the age of 103. Many of our readers will remember her 100th Birthday celebration and the SALT article at the time about her long and inspiring life.

In this edition of SALT we include some personal stories which we hope you find inspiring, interesting and enjoyable. Our Church Administrator, Luke, has been interviewed by Katelyn. We catch up with some adventurers who recently met up in Central Australia. We hear from the Community Meal volunteers and learn about the Lismore school visitors. The Open Church volunteers often meet interesting visitors and we hear about one such encounter with links to the past. Enjoy our Spring Edition.

*The editorial team (Katelyn, Wendy & Ian)*

A soft-focus background image of a church interior. In the foreground, a vase holds a bouquet of flowers, including yellow and pink roses and purple hydrangeas. In the background, a piano is visible, and the warm lighting of the church creates a peaceful atmosphere.

"See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me."

**Song of Songs 11-13**

# A WORD OF PRAYER

## WELL MORE THAN A WORD

In 2007 as part of my field education I spent time with the Church of South India and working at the Bethany Centre, a women's hostel, in Chennai, India. The hostel was located in the Muslim Quarter of the city and I remember vividly the call to prayer. At that moment I was confronted that around the world each hour our Muslim brothers and sisters stopped to pray, the rhythm of their daily lives included prayer, this action connecting them to God and each other. I reflected on the richness of this practice and the reality that perhaps we miss out in our faith tradition - let's be honest, in the busyness of life who has time to stop and pray? The reality is that we must take and make time for prayer.

To spend time in prayer is to spend time engaging with God, to acknowledge the holy even in the ordinary, it's an opportunity to be transformed. One of the reasons that I have taken this opportunity to discuss prayer is that our visioning day revealed some level of anxiety among people around prayers for the people, with some happy to read yet not write the prayer.

There is no right or wrong way to pray, yet for many people fear sets in raising questions like; "what should I say?" "What should I include?" So what I offer here about prayers for the people is perhaps a bit of a formula to support people on their journey.

Within the Service of the Lord's Day, which is the term used for the order we follow each Sunday, we are provided with an opportunity to offer our prayers for the people. A formula I offer to people when asked for advice includes:

- Prayers for the World - what is happening in the world at the moment, what do we need to be asking for? Where has conflict broken out or where does it continue? Currently the world is ravished by COVID so many people are suffering and grieving, are lonely and afraid.
- Prayers for the Leaders - this is an opportunity to prayer for decision makers, political, economic and social. What decisions have been made that may perpetuate injustice? We can ask for wisdom and careful discernment of world leaders and decision makers.
- Prayers for the Church and her Leaders - this is an opportunity to pray for the church whole, not only the Uniting Church, perhaps we have heard of a situation in another denomination and we need to uphold them in prayer and love. It's an opportunity to prayer for Assembly, Synod, Presbyteries, church council, elders and ministers.
- Prayers for the Community - this is an opportunity to pray for our congregation and the people of Brisbane. We may include specific members that have asked for our prayers because they are unwell, unable to attend, are maybe grieving.

There are many prayer resources available and as long as authorship is acknowledged if a prayer has been found that expresses concern for the issues in our world, even if not identified specifically as above share it - the prayer may be simply a prayer for peace, a prayer for unity, a prayer for justice.

# A WORD OF PRAYER

## WELL MORE THAN A WORD CONTINUED

What prayers for the people are not, includes:

- An extension of the prayer for forgiveness
- An opportunity to share personal information without consent

Prayers for the people in the worship service ought to be no longer than 3 - 4 minutes, we confess a God who is present in our lives and the world and so details can be brief, indeed it may even be a call to a period of silence to enable people to offer their own prayers.

Writing prayers is an opportunity to engage with our creativity too, recognising that God has many names. It's an opportunity to explore these names and images and in prayers for the people it's an opportunity to invite others on the journey of exploration.

As a congregation we commit to building one another up in love and so hopefully this helps break through anxiety of sharing. What I do hope is that each of us takes some time to reflect on prayer and prayer life. Maybe some will be encouraged to give it a go, maybe others would like to but would still like the prayers to be written for them and that is OK. We are a community together, let us support one another in love. If nothing more what I would like to encourage each of you to do is spend a bit of time writing a prayer. Play with words and images and call on God to meet you in that play.

For those who would like to share a prayer, even anonymously, please do send them through, let us create a community of prayer that can be shared.

In the name of the Holy Ancient Wisdom that is God.  
Peace be with you.

*Susan Pickering*



# CHURCH COUNCIL

In the last edition of SALT, I reported on an initial ten initiatives that the Church Council has been working on, following discussion at the AGM in November last year. I am pleased to provide a progress report below:

Initiative	Status
(1) Improve the use of the church space for concerts and other rentals	Yet to start
(2) Actively encourage the use of the church for weddings	Complete
(3) Undertake a stewardship campaign	Yet to start
(4) Establish specialist worship services	Complete
(5) Actively seek external grants	Yet to start
(6) Review and streamline out ICT costs	In Progress
(7) Discuss out contribution to the CPMF with Synod	Complete
(8) Actively manage our parking arrangements	Complete
(9) Seek to establish a tax-deductible fund for music/arts and possibly heritage	Complete
(10) Seek sponsorship for choral scholars and possibly an organ scholar	Complete

Six of the items are now complete and I have provided a colour coding to show which have been completed (Green), which are in progress (Orange) and which are yet to start (Purple).

We held a very well attended (41 people) visioning day on 6th June and I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this. We have consolidated the feedback from this session and we now have 35 ideas across the four categories of “Worship”, “Music and Outreach”, “Community Service” and “Communication/Property/Heritage/Fund Raising”. The Church Council had a first look at this during its meeting on 12th July and we will now call a Congregational meeting to seek everyone’s advice on the priority for tackling these ideas. We will also look at how to include the four remaining initiatives from the table above.

I am particularly happy to report that the new “St. Andrews Uniting Church Choral and Organ Scholarship Program, in collaboration with Musica Viva, Australia” is running well and we are looking at the potential for an Organ scholarship.

It is pleasing to be able to report that the Church’s Con Spirito concert series has been going from strength to strength with high calibre performances at the regular monthly lunchtime concerts and that the initiative to hold occasional evening concerts is progressing well.

Our Community meal has continued strongly despite the COVID restrictions and I would like to record my thanks to everyone involved with this important and very worthwhile activity.

*Nick Tate, Chair, Church Council*

# COMMUNITY MEAL UPDATE

The Community Meal at Saint Andrew's, in August, passed its 6 year Anniversary and has continued to serve delicious home style meals throughout this time. The difference in our meal is that each week, the meals are planned, prepared and served with love by a dedicated team of cooks and hall volunteers.

We have successfully negotiated lockdowns, which involved takeaway meals served in a socially distanced way, as well as a combination of sit down and takeaway meals. This is a challenge and requires more volunteers in the hall. But nothing is too difficult for our very talented team. New volunteers are always welcome and can register with Luke in the church office.

Throughout the winter, we have served on average a total of 75 'firsts', a number of 'seconds' and several meals to be frozen for Luke to distribute during the week. An amazing effort!



**Photos: L-R: Paul (supervisor) and Terry (volunteer) serving take away dessert; Merrilyn (cook) and Alan (helper and dishwasher) preparing the meal; a takeaway meal of Curried Tuna Rice Slice with Roasted vegetables.**

# COMMUNITY MEAL

## LISMORE VISIT

In July we once again welcomed the students from the Lismore Catholic Diocese, who come to Brisbane on their yearly Street Retreat, to take part in a variety of Social Justice Activities. This year a group of 4 plus a teacher, assisted Merrilyn and I in the Kitchen and a larger group worked with Wilson and his team in the hall. The students were extremely committed and their help was very much appreciated.

Their contribution to the meal involved the preparation, cooking and service of Banana Caramel Self Saucing Pudding and Custard for takeaway dessert. The feedback we received was that the students loved the cooking and their involvement in our service to the community.



Photos L-R: Students preparing to serve the dessert; Morning team break for the team.

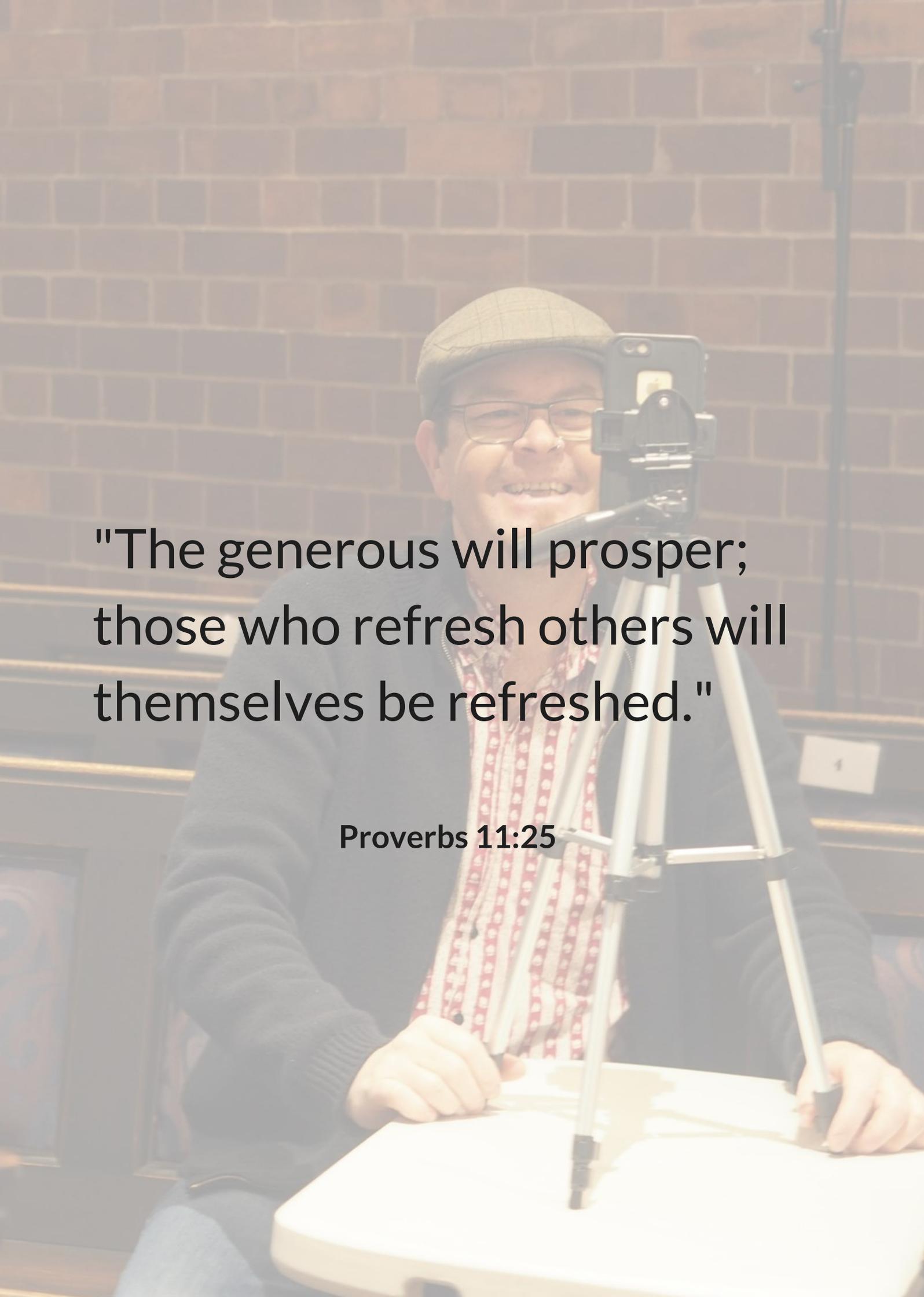
### HOW YOU CAN HELP

We at the Community are always grateful for your assistance in maintaining this very necessary service to the community. There are a number of ways you can help:

- Volunteering in the kitchen. No particular skills needed as the Cook in charge will give you appropriate tasks and show you what to do.
- Volunteering in the hall. Training will be provided and the team is very friendly. Call Luke in the Office for information.
- Donating good second hand clothing and items to 'Plus One' – toiletries, to be distributed as needed on Saturday. Jann and Rex Niven, manage this task, so see them for more information.
- Financial support is always welcome.

So thanks to everyone who helps, even in a small way, to keep this wonderful outreach of Saint Andrew's UC, functioning successfully.

*Beth Brand*



"The generous will prosper;  
those who refresh others will  
themselves be refreshed."

Proverbs 11:25

# STREET RETREAT

## LISMORE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

The Catholic Schools Office, in the Diocese of Lismore has been bringing Year 11 students from twelve secondary colleges to Brisbane for a Street Retreat for the past ten years. Students apply to attend and need to fit a criterion. It is a much sought after experience which often changes their perspective and sometimes their lives.

The group goes to a number of venues in and around Brisbane that work with people on the margins of society, including Saint Andrew's community meal.

We introduce the students to Catholic Social Teaching which sums up the teachings of the Church on social justice issues. It promotes a vision of a just society that is grounded in the Bible and in the wisdom gathered from experience by the Christian community as it has responded to social justice issues through history.

The reason we offer this experience for students is to realise each human person has innate dignity. Street Retreat nurtures an awareness and right relationship of respect with those most marginalised.

We structure the retreat around a few essential elements – attending ministries, reflection, prayer and community (fellowship). The students go to a variety of ministries with a partner of the opposite gender from their school and do whatever is asked of them. After the experience they are expected to journal for about 15 minutes answering the following questions;

- What ministry placement did you participate in?
- Who did you encounter and interact with during your ministry placement?
- What challenged you during your ministry placement.

Each night as a whole group they debrief the day in small groups and the day finishes with prayer. There is also opportunity to eat together and form long lasting relationships with each other.

A couple of quotes from this year's retreat:

*"Street Retreat reminded me that to live a Christian life, we literally have to live out the Gospel and do as Jesus did."*

*"Street Retreat is one of the best experiences I have had the pleasure to attend. It has encouraged me to get more involved within the community in my town as well as pushing and participating further in school ministry opportunities. It really opened my eyes to anything I never really thought about and encourages me to become a better me and continue to help those less fortunate than myself."*

*"It's helped me to appreciate the little things in life that God has given me by opening my eyes to the lives of the less fortunate, I have been encouraged to live out a more physical faith to live out and help people in my own town."*

Kate Nestor

# ADMIN INTERVIEW

## INTERVIEWER KATELYN MARTIN

### **Can you tell us how you became a Christian?**

Funny story actually when I was 21 I watched the movie God's Not Dead (can't recommend it, it is trash) and it turned me from a strict atheist to a Christian. I only found the film because I was watching atheist reacts to dumb Christian movies. I declared myself a Christian straight after watching the film but my Christianity lay dormant for five years till a friend of mine dragged me to a local mission for students called The Garden. It is run by missionaries who give free food to students and give a bible talk once a week. Joining that community is where I learnt how to truly be a Christian and it is where I grew in my faith.

### **How did you figure out you were trans and when?**

Asking the tough questions. Yeah, something a lot of you don't know about me is I am a trans man, so I was born a woman. If this is a shock or you have questions feel free to talk to me; I am completely open about it. I generally haven't brought it up because it hasn't come up in conversation.

But to answer your question I have always known, it just took me a long time to come to terms with it. There was a point in my life that I was quite conservative and had a lot of conservative influences in my life so I had to hide who I was and internalise my feelings, that was until I went to arts school and was able to see people like me. So slowly but surely, I was able to open up and live life authentically. In terms of how I figured it out, it wasn't that I played with boys' toys or wore boys' clothes, though those things made me feel better about myself, they don't indicate what someone is just what they like. What it was, was that I didn't feel right in my body. And I tried everything to change it, I lost 20kg, and got piercings and tattoos but none of it made the feeling go away until I started living authentically.

### **How has your identity influenced your faith walk?**

It hasn't. When I came out and changed my name I was going to MCC which is a queer church so there were no negative influences. And any qualms I had were quelled by an advisor of mine from The Garden telling me "God made me a woman to make me a better man."

What are your passions aside from admin at Saint Andrew's?

There are two things I love and that's art and helping people.

### **Do you have any hidden talents?**

I am a poet, I perform all over Brisbane with my poetry. I write songs, I was recently asked to write a piece for Scomodo Voce Singers with a talented Brisbane composer. I also am a photographer and showed in a couple of galleries last year. In addition, I make most of the bowties I wear (though if I'm wearing one that looks practically well-made, Beth probably made it).

### **What are your long-term goals?**

I am still figuring it out and I think that is the fun of life. Everything I have always done has been orientated around helping people, probably why I am now coordinating the community meal. But I have recently decided to put my film degree to good use and start an organisation helping mentally disabled people make a film. So, giving a voice to a group who usually don't have one. It is more of a short-term project but hopefully it will help me figure out what I want to do long-term.

# PADEMIC PEREGRINATIONS

## A TALE OF TWO JOURNEYS: THE LULHAM'S AND THE WITHNALL'S

*Peregrination: noun: literary, humorous. A journey, especially a long or meandering one*

In a shocking twist, a worldwide pandemic and severe travel restrictions wreaked havoc on the best-laid travel plans of both the Lulham's and the Withnall's. Our intention was to visit our son, Peter and his partner, Kate, in Adelaide, while Ian and Chris had planned an outback adventure to test the fortitude of their new 4WD and off-road caravan.

We succeeded in visiting Peter and Kate, though we had to spend two weeks wandering in the desert before South Australia would admit any travellers from SE Qld. Better than 40 days and 40 nights, or indeed 40 years! Under the circumstances fourteen days touring the more well-known landmarks of the NT hardly seems worth complaining about. We were travelling with neighbours who were also intent on visiting offspring in Adelaide, making the journey a very pleasant experience.



Meanwhile, Ian and Chris had sent me their itinerary, which had them travelling in a similar direction but a couple of weeks later. Meeting up seemed unlikely. Although I favour organisation, the past year has taught me that flexibility can work too. As we travelled south to Adelaide—by, quite logically, heading both north and west—the situation in NSW deteriorated. Our planned return trip through far-western NSW became increasingly unlikely—and, ultimately, impossible.



Time to replan. There seemed no alternative but to more or less retrace our steps: north through SA, back into the NT, crossing into Qld at Camooweal.

### The Withnall's!

A quick check of their itinerary told me we'd be crossing paths in Alice Springs - well, almost. My new-found flexibility had me . . . delaying our trip out of the Alice by a couple of days so we could

spend a day with Ian and Chris. At this point, our travel buddies had acquired new skills too: they now felt confident enough to continue their journey back to Brisbane without us.

We have spent time with Ian and Chris in London - a memorable Christmas; in New York - where we learnt about the rocks of Central Park; in Boston; in Niagara Falls; and in Adelaide. Probably a few other spots closer to home as well. This time we were in Central Australia and were sure we'd learn a thing or two about the geology of the area.



# PADEMIC PEREGRINATIONS

## A TALE OF TWO JOURNEYS: THE LULHAM'S AND THE WITHNALL'S

What we discovered was that the Withnall's take Social Distancing very seriously.

With supplies for the day on board, Gordon and I piled into the Withnall 4WD and we all headed north on the Stuart Highway for a while before turning right onto an unsealed road heading along the northern side of the East McDonnell Ranges. After seeing, um - no cars at all - just a few cattle, we eventually stopped for morning tea at an 'intersection' (I use the term loosely). There were a few signs dotted about what looked like farm tracks in a paddock. Gordon displayed his fire-lighting skills, boiled his eco-billy and we had morning tea.

After several Kodak moment stops and more unsealed road we arrived at Central Australia's very first significant European settlement, Arltunga. Arltunga was a gold mining settlement and covered a considerable area. We drove between the 'Crossroads' where the bakery, a hotel and a store were located and was the intended town centre, a couple of cemeteries, the Police Station area and the original mine buildings. With the temperature hovering around the low 30's the solid stone structures that had been built in the early 1900's are a welcome relief for tourists and must have made life somewhat more bearable for the inhabitants.



During our picnic-lunch break near the Police Station and associated lockup, a couple of other 4WDs, towing off-road vans, came by and broke our strict, self-imposed social distancing rules. This suggested we were nearing more heavily populated areas and after lunch we drove the remainder of the unsealed road to reach the Ross River Homestead, an oasis at the eastern



end of the East McDonnell Ranges. Ross River is also an oasis of geology and Ian spent as much time looking out the window as at the road ahead. From here it was an easy drive of about 80kms back to Alice Springs along a sealed road.

We farewelled Ian and Chris the next morning as we headed north for home while they continued their travels around the lesser-known landmarks of the Northern Territory.

After six weeks away from home and having driven 12 000kms in our trusty Passat, we feel very fortunate to have been able to visit our son in Adelaide and to have seen so much of Australia at the same time. As one would expect during a pandemic, there was a downside. We weren't able to visit our daughter, Kimberley and her partner Pae, in Melbourne, as we had originally intended. As soon as we're able we will rectify this. Perhaps there are some interesting geological features in that part of the country that Ian can help us out with. The Twelve Apostles or Hanging Rock perhaps.

# OPEN CHURCH VISITORS

## A NOTE FROM PAM RUSSELL

I am letting you know about two visitors I had when I was on Open Church.

My visitors were Robert Vickers, and his son Allan (see photo). The Royal Flying Doctor Flag in our church was put there in recognition of John Flynn and Robert's father, Allan. On the wall near the flag is a brass plaque about this.

Robert told me his father died at sea in 1967, but his memorial service was held at Saint Andrew's.

*Dr Allan Vickers worked for the Royal Flying Doctor Service for 35 years. With the prompting of the Reverend John Flynn, Vickers joined the Aerial Medical Service of the Presbyterian Australian Inland Mission and between 1931 and 1934 was medical superintendent at Cloncurry, North Queensland. In hazardous flights to outback locations which lacked proper landing facilities, Vickers averaged approximately 40,000 kilometres a year in his de Havilland 50 cabin biplane (DH50) which was equipped with a battery-operated portable transmitter. After financial support for the mission had been eroded by the Depression, in 1933 he began a publicity and fund-raising drive that led to the formation of an independent body, the National Aerial Medical Service of Australia. He was recalled by the Queensland section of what was, after 1942, the Flying Doctor Service, and established its second base at Charleville in 1943. He was chief medical officer there from 1951 to 1954.*

(Source: <https://monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/people/medicine/display/113261-dr-allan-vickers>)



Allan and Robert Vickers (photo by Pam Russell)



# TRIBUTE TO ELAINE AND KEITH MITCHELL

It's not often that a couple can be associated with and involved in a church for the best part of seventy years, but that can be said of Keith and Elaine Mitchell. Saint Andrews was their rock for all of their married life, and comprised the foundation years for Geoffrey, Lindsay and Janette, their children.

Dad moved to Saint Andrews at the age of fourteen, just before the onset of World War 2. Mum came (we think) a few years later. They met at what was then the Saint Andrews Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia, and married in 1955. Children followed in 1956 (Geoff), 1958 (Lindsay) and 1961 (Janette).

Mum was a member of the choir from the outset, until her voice and her sight failed her in her late 70s. Her appreciation of the music at Saint Andrews was more than just appreciation. She loved it viscerally, often commenting to us at a Sunday get together how lovely it was. Dad never learned a musical instrument – he used to joke that he played the linoleum!- but also loved the music and had a talent that could have been really something. He learned to appreciate classical music through supporting Mum. I remember hearing him harmonise to the hymns every Sunday. It was a gift they both gave to all three of us to varying extents.

# OPEN CHURCH VISITORS

## A NOTE FROM PAM RUSSELL

Mum was also a founding member of the Saint Andrew's Women's Association. It was initially started to bring young mothers together, but as the children grew and eventually flew the nest, that group continued well into retirement age. She was a longstanding member of the flower roster (and was convenor of the Flower roster), and developed a real skill in flower arranging. Those flowers enhanced church services for decades. She served at innumerable after church gatherings, and she hosted hundreds of church-based gatherings at our home. Hospitality was one of Mum's hallmarks.

Dad, meantime, used his considerable organisational skills in all manner of roles in the church. He was an Elder, a member of the Church Council and held the roles of chair, secretary, and treasurer over the years, Superintendent of Sunday school, Coordinator of the "stewardship" process, Chair of the Heritage Committee, the organ restoration committee, and organiser of the dinners of eight for multiple years. He did some lay preaching in his younger years. These are just the ones we can recall. There must have been many others.

They also took home people who visited Saint Andrew's for Sunday lunch. Together they took their turns supervising the open church program that was going for years.

Most important from our perspective were the lifelong friends they made at Saint Andrews. Friends from fellowship days, through to friends from today. You, the congregation were the rock on which they built their lives, and whose friendship gave them meaning and joy. We will always be grateful to you all for what you gave back to them.

They left Saint Andrews in January 2019, to enter a high care facility in Toowoomba when their physical health completely disabled them. We were grateful for the send-off they were given in the Church Hall.

Their health continued to decline. Mum deteriorated quickly and died the day after their 66th wedding anniversary this year. Dad followed two months later, having developed a rapid and severe dementia. So they are together again with the Lord, in eternal bodies that will never fail them again.

Thank you, Saint Andrews for giving them the meaning in their lives. We will always be grateful.

*Geoff and Lindsay Mitchell, and Janette Eckersley*



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

At morning Tea on Sunday August 14th, we helped Jann Niven celebrate her 80th Birthday with a very special cake that she brought to share. Her birthday celebrations had to be scaled down due to the COVID situation, so it was lovely to be able to acknowledge Jann's special day together.

Jann is well loved in the church for her service to the Community Meal and the Social Justice table.

Happy Birthday Jann!