



CENTENARY 2018

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FOREWORD

The Church's One Foundation

Recent decades have brought many changes to St Andrews Reservoir.

It's not everything, but one sign of a healthy church is that its membership reflects the community in which it's located. Meaning: rather than depending on people crossing suburbs, the strength of a church lies in people attending from the surrounding streets. So, the composition of the church becomes a microcosm of the suburb itself.

A 19th century hymn writer, Sam Stone, wrote a classic piece that the Christian church has been singing for 150 years: "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord."

In one verse, we sing: "Elect from every nation, yet one throughout the earth; her charter of salvation – one Lord, one faith, one birth". We've seen that demonstrated before our eyes in the current composition of church membership. There's been a wonderful inflow from many nations. Some arrive with faith in Jesus intact from the homeland, others have found faith here alongside side us.

In another verse, we sing: "Though with a scornful wonder, men see her much oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed". We are blessed by the Lord in that we've been spared schism and heresy. For sure, it's not always been smooth sailing – there's been a night or two of weeping – but on the whole, we've been protected from dispute and scandal.

Our joy is found in that we belong to Christ and we rest secure in union with him. We long to be the "church victorious" and "the church at rest", but we have much yet to do "for the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few", and so ... we pray to the Lord of the harvest, to send out workers from St Andrews into his harvest field.

In the pages that follow, we see this prayer and vision being worked out amongst us.

Rev John P Wilson

Moderator General, former Minister and current member of St Andrew's Reservoir

Sept 2018



CENTENARY 2018

SYNOPSIS of our HISTORY (prepared by Graeme Miller in 2014 & added to)

YEARS	THE PEOPLE	MINISTERS
1918	Under the direction of Presbytery the first worship services were conducted in the community hall at the Church of England (Ralph St).	
1923	From the vision of Mrs Rose Irwin, a Sunday School gathered in her Compton St home (No. 9).	
1924	So large had the Sunday School grown that a weather-board hall was built in Ashley St. (120 pupils, over 6 teachers).	
1926	The Reservoir congregation was officially classed as a Home Mission station.	From 1926, for the next 25 years, the church was led by retired ministers and theological students from Ormond College.
1951	The congregation moved to call a minister [at this stage it was a combined parish with Epping and West Thornbury (Rennie St)].	<u>Rev John C. Rainsbury</u> [1952 - 1957] (5 years)
1955	Sunday School numbers were so large that the brick Kindergarten Hall was built onto the rear of the main hall.	
1958		<u>Rev Hilton White</u>
1965	The present two storey brick church was built.	[1958 - 1967] (9 years)

1967	The present brick-veneer manse was built for the minister and his family (previous manse at 34 Ashley St).	<u>Rev Edgar M. Johnston</u> [1967 - 1976] (9 years)
1977		<u>Rev Graham F. Lyman</u>
1983	The weatherboard Sunday School hall, built in 1924, was renovated, brick veneered and the kitchen re-equipped.	[1977 - 1983] (6 years)
1984		<u>Rev John P. Wilson</u>
1991	The debt on the hall renovations cleared.	[1984 - 1995] (10½ years)
1993	St Andrew's Reservoir celebrated 75 years of God's blessing.	
1996	Gas central heating was installed in the church & manse.	<u>Rev David Capill</u> [1996 - 1997] (1½ years)
1998	Manse is extended with ensuite to main bedroom.	<u>Rev A. Chris Sirriweera</u> [1998 - 2002] (4 Years)
2003	Further extensions are made to the manse with the addition of a family room and evaporative cooling.	
2004		<u>Rev Ross W. Tucker</u> [2004 - 2009] (5 Years)
2007	ESL classes commence	
2012	Data projection equipment installed in church.	
2013		<u>Rev. Andrew Vines</u> [2013 -
2014	Small hall refurbished in readiness for rebirth of children's ministry. Accessible toilet is built.	
2015	STA Welcome Centre commenced	
2017	5.00pm Evening Service commences on May 7 th	
2018	Centenary Celebrations on September 9th	

STORIES FROM THE DECADES - THE 1950s

Early Memories of St. Andrew's Church from 1948.

Gwen Young remembers:

Going back to the 1940's, there are a great many happy memories of times at St Andrew's. Looking back to the very welcome greeting when I arrived that first time, to the many great occasions attended over the years. There were too many to recall them all.

There were many happy times with the PGA (Presbyterian Girls Association), the boys were the PBA, later to become the PFA (Presbyterian Fellowship Association for teenagers), and I enjoyed the great fellowship given from both leaders and other members. We had many social events to attend, the games nights and Church Socials where members from other local Churches were invited. Also the concerts with many of the parishioners doing an act, e.g. playing an instrument, singing or doing a recitation, and usually a short play from one of the stories of the Bible. I vividly remember my main speech as Rachel, "And my people will be your people and your people will be my people" said with 'as much passion as I could' as told by one of the play leaders.

There were also the camps to look forward to. We went to the Belgrave Heights Convention each year and Beryl, one of our leaders, would take us to a house on the Mornington Peninsula. Also we went to visit other Churches in the country areas. One of these I remember was Camperdown, going on the country train (a steam train!) was great excitement. We also attended the Billy Graham Crusade held in the Showgrounds which was a very exciting day for all.

At this time there were a lot of Church fund-raising events being held to raise money for the building of a new brick Church as the numbers were growing. Everyone had a very busy and enjoyable time organising travelling suppers, fetes, street stalls and various other events. At that time Church services were held in the hall behind the current Church.

My husband and I were married in that hall in 1955. A very happy memory, as we have now been married for 63 years, and all four of our children attended St Andrew's Church. We still have a soft spot for that hall.

Later I was to become a member of the PWMU (Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union) and enjoyed the friendship of the ladies at St Andrew's. We also had the opportunity to meet ladies from other Presbyterian Churches and our local Churches as we would invite them to our Morning Coffees and Lunches and they would invite us to their special events. There was always a 'trading table' of home-made goods. This was indeed a wonderful time of fellowship for all, while raising funds for missionaries at the same time.

Over the years there were also many activities held involving the local community, especially for the children e.g. the School Holidays programs as well as Friday After-School Clubs. These were well attended and many of us were happy to be involved.

Altogether I have many very happy memories of years at St Andrew's Church, and now to see the new generation of members and the many activities still happening, it is lovely to see the Church growing and developing for, we trust, generations to come.

THE 1960s

Beginning in 1958.....

Pamela Oliver and Paula Wilson (nee Oliver) write:

In 1958 we began our church life with the Reservoir Presbyterian Church. Sunday School was held in what is now the present Church Hall. Because of space constraints we attended Kinder Sunday School at the Regina Function Centre in Edwardes St. We were encouraged to bring a Bible to Sunday School and had our own children's version of the hymn book. We sang heartily. Memory verses on cards ensured we were prepared for Bible study each week. Bible based learning and prayer was encouraged faithfully by our teachers. Regular attendance was recognized with awards at the annual Church Anniversary services.

We celebrated Harvest Festival, on occasions had guest speakers and every year enjoyed the church picnic on Cup Day at Wattle Park. Friendships made in those days remain current. We attended PGA and PFA during the week. Games were played on the tennis court - the site of our new church where we were to attend Senior Bible Study. The original church became the church hall. At Senior Bible Class Mrs Kelly framed her studies to help us understand the importance of repentance and forgiveness by God. Her candid reflections of God's work in her life coupled with the teaching of previous years, prepared us, by God's grace, to claim a personal faith in God through his son Jesus Christ.

The arrival of the Johnston family in the late 1960s was to have a profound impact on our understanding of practical authentic Christian living. Rev Edgar Johnston strongly encouraged conversational prayer. Practicing this firsthand the congregation prayed for ten young men to join the church. Margaret's explanation of being a Christian was a gift from God. In her words Christianity was not complicated. Indeed what was required of us was to live our lives simply such that we loved God before all others, including family. It would follow naturally that lives so lived pleased and honoured God. Our youth group grew in faith and purpose. All of us taught Sunday School and attended Church both morning and evening. At night we'd finish up at the manse where we would sing, pray and share supper.

Through Mr Johnston we became involved in Young Wycliffe and stomped out mud bricks at Kangaroo Ground. Connections with Eltham Presbyterian Church paved the way for annual church camps at Somers. Yes we could swim there, but what we valued most were the bible studies. At night we would gather in our huts and share in a way we had not done before about how much our lives were impacted by our love for God. We covered each other in prayer and this became our practice. Weekly bible studies at our homes, bus trips to YFC in the city, carolling from the back of a van using a pump organ for support, Easter holidays at Belgrave Heights Christian Conventions and trips to other churches to lead services, developed Christian leadership skills that have served us since. Together we studied the Constitution of the Church and the Westminster Confession and at the time of Union voted to honour God by remaining a Presbyterian Church. Paramount was the importance of Bible based behaviours and activities. Encouraged to take sermon notes, we continued this practice when Rev Graham Lyman came to the church. In time we moved on from Reservoir, but God has been gracious in moving with us. We have learned to have time alone and enjoy God and trust him. We praise God for growing our faith and sustaining us all these years.

Family Migration

Cynthia Wambeek writes for herself and her family

My husband and I migrated to Australia 57 years ago (1961) with our three children, Sherille, Bill and Sharon. The first thing we did on arrival was to look for a place to worship, and we soon found St Andrew's, Reservoir. Since then, we have been privileged and blessed to be part of the St Andrew's church family. Looking back, many blessings come to mind. There is the faithful preaching and teaching of the Scriptures, especially to our children and grandchildren in Sunday School and youth groups. There are the times of joy: my daughter Sherille's wedding and the baptism of my grandsons Matthew and Luke. And times of sorrow as well: the funeral services to remember my husband Willie and my son Bill. Other blessings have come through times of fellowship in the PWMU and Bible Study.

I thank God for the opportunities that I was given to serve Him through His church in different ways and for the friends who have helped me spiritually and practically. A special thank you to all those who have, over the years, faithfully prayed for me and my family, especially my daughter Sharon with her special needs. I remember the generosity of the church in giving a donation to Agapi Care to support Sharon's accommodation, and as a family we are especially grateful to John Wilson for his role in making this possible. I praise and thank the Lord for the miracle of revival in our church in answer to prayer. To God be the glory, great things He has done! As he has said, 'I will be exalted in the heavens, and I will be exalted in the earth'!

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for ourselves, in living power remake us
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us;
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith

Memories of our Church

Diane Brownley (nee Fairweather) writes:

St Andrew's has always been special to me and has been my Church home for all my 66 yrs. Sunday School in the 1950's and 60's was the event of the week. We dressed in our 'Sunday' best, with a coin in our bag or pocket for the collection and, in class, learned Bible stories and God's way of living from our committed teachers. I remember learning the books of the Bible and having to recite them to the teacher. There were so many children; rooms had to be rented at the nearby Regina Receptions, for classes. At Anniversary time, we would have tiered stands on the stage to sit on and sing our well-practised songs. It was a bit scary climbing up to the top level for me. For Sunday School picnics we'd go to Wattle Park in Burwood in a furniture van and at lunch time we'd sit in a circle and be given a plastic cup of cordial and a sandwich that the ladies had made that morning in the Church kitchen.

As a teenager and in my early 20's our pastor was Rev Edgar Johnston. He was committed to mission work but also to his congregation. There were about 10 of us single girls and he said he was praying for 10 single men to come to our congregation as he didn't want to lose 'his' girls. Over the next few years the young men came and relationships formed and the weddings started to occur! It was a wonderful group of young Christians and this has led to life-long friendships. Today, from that group, there are pastors, pastor's wives, elders, deacons and short-term missionaries, and included in this group is the current Moderator-General of PCA, John Wilson. We were all taught to value scripture and engage in personal and group prayer. We came to understand the importance of prayer. Youth Group events with leader Ken Collier were great times socially and growth spiritually. On Sundays we would have Church in the morning, do activities together in the afternoon, and then often in the evening, we'd organise a youth tea, bringing something to share, and have fellowship again at the night service. The guitars would come out and we'd have a sing along afterwards with 'It Only Takes a Spark' and other favourites. We were given opportunities to take evening services and at other Churches as well. This enabled us to stretch ourselves using the talents God gave us, mostly under the leadership of elder, Noel Johnston.

I remember my time as Kinder Superintendent under the guidance of elder, Robert Thompson. He taught me many things, how to share the Word as well as how to run meetings. It was a privilege over the years to teach the littlies about our 'great big God'.

I recall the 1977 Union vote when Churches had to decide whether to join the new Uniting Church. Rev Johnston advised us it would be unwise theologically to join but to remain steadfast as Presbyterian. Our Church congregation members did vote to remain Presbyterian and I'm so glad we did. The remaining Presbyterian Churches were small in number but God has been faithful over the years and built up the denomination again.

Like many of our youth group friends, Doug and I were married at St Andrews in 1980. Our sons Luke and Aaron grew up at St Andrew's and enjoyed the Sunday School and Youth Group. We are thankful to God for the Youth Group leaders -Brian Downes, Annette Harris & Steve Harris and the time they and older youth invested in our boys. Many Sunday afternoons they enjoyed great times hanging out together with activities organised by the leaders.

Never would I have believed that God would give us the opportunity to serve Him in Malawi, Africa in our middle-age. If it wasn't for Colin M'Bawa speaking at our Missionary Convention in 2007, and John Wilson willing to lead a team, this might not have occurred. 'Come and help us' Colin said, and God moved our hearts to go. St Andrew's has been an integral part of this mission: sending, praying and giving to enable us to 'help them' over 4 visits. The number of Churches that now have roofs, women trained in income-generating skills at Chigodi Training Centre, the imprisoned men and women encouraged in the Word and the countless maintenance jobs achieved at Orbus School would not have been possible without the people of St Andrew's standing beside us. God is no man's debtor and I pray He will richly bless those who supported this work. Alongside this was the filling of many shipping containers with relief goods sent mostly to Malawi. St Andrew's was the drop-off centre for Churches donating the needed items. A massive job accomplished by willing workers. These containers were received with singing and dancing and much thanks to God.

It gladdens many hearts to see what God has done at St Andrew's and we thank Him for answering our prayers. Today we have friends from all over the world, as a Church family, joining together to worship and serve Him here, just like those a century ago.

Thank You God for your faithfulness.

Friendship and Peace

Frances Austin writes:

St Andrew's is a place of peace and worship; a place to make good friends.

THE 1970s

Expansion and Spiritual Growth

Ian & Barrie Downes write:

When we joined this church in 1969, people were aware of a split occurring within many church congregations. It was a time when many denominations were considering uniting to make stronger churches. At the time I thought this was a good idea, but fortunately for me there were people at this Reservoir church who recognized the differences between our scripture based, reformed teaching and that of other denominations.

Under the guidance of our minister at the time, the Rev Edgar Johnston, we voted to remain true to the Presbyterian traditions and so remained as we were.

In the 60's and early 70's Reservoir was growing rapidly and many young families were encouraged to become part of our church outreach. There was a vitality among the younger, devout, growing Christian members of our church and they became involved in many of the church ministries. Successive ministers after Edgar Johnston, such as Rev Graham Lyman and Rev John Wilson and others, fostered this spiritual ministry, through prayer groups, bible studies and many other church activities.

The church was growing to overflowing – 3 Sunday Services, 200 – 300 children at Sunday School, the Faith Promise giving was introduced to support missionary outreach, a Mothers' Union group was formed, Choir training began, church camps were held, young people's groups met and younger people took part in church services. Spiritual growth was occurring, not only through the church outreach, but within the church itself.

I and many others, including my own family, have been eternally blessed, and I thank my God for the many fruitful years and the blessings we have received, through the faithful ministry and fellowship we have enjoyed through our lives within this church and we would pray that God would continue to use this church to His glory throughout many future years.

The Journey of Life

Don & Jean Johnson write:

Life is like a journey. It has many ups and downs, and it was one such event in our lives - a very steep and near tragic rise in our journey over 40 years ago, that brought us to St Andrew's. We needed a guide, and it was through the firm friendships, teaching from the pulpit, and the Grace of God that has been the guiding influence on our lives ever since. I was brought up on the Gospel stories, however it was the confluence of maturity and the superb teaching of people like Graham Lyman, John Wilson and others, that lead us to a deeper understanding of God's love, and put us on the right path ever since. Our daughter, Val, had a visit from a minister who worshipped at Bundoora church. When Val told him that we had shifted to Bundoora, he said "Your parents could come to Bundoora church". Val said "I don't like your chances". She was right!

These past 40 years have been wonderful to us and St Andrew's will be our worship home till God calls us to His Heavenly home.

Tea and biscuits, Youth Group & Bible teaching - early 70s

Kath McDonald writes:

It seems a long time to be looking back, but in doing so, three particular things come to mind: Rev Edgar Johnston's cuppa, the Youth Group and the strong Bible Teaching and lively groups in which to be involved.

Rev Edgar Johnston so valued the Sunday School teachers of his day, that he arranged the starting of a cup of tea and a biscuit to be available for the teachers after the teaching session and between the two regular morning Worship Services. This later grew to be available to all the Congregation, and still continues to this day.

The Youth Group of the 1980s – 1990s served our four children very well indeed, both in Bible learning and fellowship & in activity-based fun. Thanks must go to the dedicated team of at least 10 leaders.

Our congregation has been blessed over the years by a total commitment to providing sound Bible Teaching. This is a remarkable feature of worship here and we are very thankful for it.

Why do we worship God at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Reservoir?

This is Reg and Janice Butcher's story:

We both grew up in Christian homes and attended Presbyterian churches but in very different locations; one in the city and one in a rural area. We had both dedicated our lives to our Lord Jesus Christ before we met each other. Then, together, we attended St Margaret's Presbyterian Church in Balaclava and married there in 1968. Six months later, we moved into the house we built in Bulleen.

We attended a local Presbyterian Church; we became involved in the life of this church. We led the youth group, taught Sunday School; Reg was ordained an elder, Janice was music leader. Two of our children were born while we were members there. But this church was not like the ones we grew up in.

Our hearts were not at peace; we were not used to the casual preaching; often entirely ignoring the scriptures; mostly emphasising a social aspect of Christianity. We were aware of the discussions regarding Church Union along with the Methodists and Congregationalists. We knew the church we were attending would agree to Union. We obtained the booklet "The Basis of Union" and studied it and became convinced that this was not for us. But where would we go??

There were several Presbyterian Churches to consider. Rev Edgar and Lily Johnston were ministering at St Andrew's in Reservoir. Reg knew them from his time at Melbourne Uni. Reg worshiped at Flemington PC while Edgar and Lily were there, and he also taught Sunday School. The Johnstons had welcomed this student from the country into their home. Reg was also assured that in going to Reservoir, we would hear God's Holy Word being preached; and prayers would be prayed to God confident that He was listening.

Leaving a church is not easy. But with God's help we did it. We attended St Andrew's in 1975. Edgar and Lily welcomed us warmly, glad to see Reg again. And in 1976 with our membership transferred, we belonged to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Reservoir. We were happy and we felt at home. In 1977, the vote for Union came, but Reservoir remained Presbyterian. Praise God.

Our four children were raised and nurtured in the Scriptures here. They learned about repentance, forgiveness, redemption; all through and because of the sacrificial death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our children all belong to Jesus. God has blessed us.

We all grew in our knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and God's sovereign grace. We accepted responsibilities; Reg as SS teacher, Board Member, then Board secretary, elder, Kids Club convenor, then treasurer, and many years as Clerk of Presbytery. Janice was kept busy with SS teaching, exciting SS anniversary musicals, choir, more music and also hospitality as she could manage it.

God has blessed us so much. As we grow older, we are assured of our Salvation. God has promised us. The church at Reservoir has been our home where we have worshiped God for over 40 years now. Our great God has blessed us with faithful preaching of His Word, Christians to fellowship with and opportunities to serve Him. In recent years, God has been reviving our church, with people from every nation; young couples, uni students, refugees; all looking for Godly nurture and a place to worship Him. Now, we have a new ministry to many of these younger people who are far away from their families.

*Psalm 67:1,2 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us,
that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.*

The Missionary Council – formed in 1970

Annette Harris recalls:

The Missionary Council was formed by one of our earlier ministers, Rev Edgar Johnston in 1970. With a heart for missions he set in motion our Faith Promise program. This involved people praying and promising to give financially in faith for 12 months, towards the work of missions. At that time an amount of \$2,000 was promised.

Since then the congregation at St Andrew's has continued this legacy and has faithfully promised, in dependence on God, financial support of many missionaries. We have been able to give on a regular basis monies to assist missionaries overseas as well as those working here in Australia. For the year 2017-2018 a total amount of over \$24,000 was promised for the work of missions. We continue to give thanks to God for His goodness to us in enabling us to assist in this way.

Over the last 25 years many people from different missionary organisations have been financially supported. In addition, one-off gifts have been allocated to a number of other folk on mission, when their needs have become known.

Missionaries in 2018

Annette lists the missionaries who we currently support both financially and in prayer:

Wally & Natasha Kulakoff - serving with *Mission Eurasia*. Wally travels to the former Soviet Union and works with local churches, training, equipping and encouraging Christian leaders in evangelism and church planting.

Ian & Rachel Campbell - serving with *Pioneers* in Asia, teaching and tutoring Iranian refugees.

Steve Denness - serving with *A.F.E.S. (Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students)* at R.M.I.T., Melbourne, ministering to students through the Christian Union.

Motor Isaac Yat - serving with *A.P.W.M. (Australian Presbyterian World Mission)* in Ethiopia sharing God's word amongst Sudanese refugees.

Colin & Alison Morrow - serving with *P.I.M. (Presbyterian Inland Mission)* based in Mildura. They travel the Mungo patrol in south west NSW and north-west Victoria, travelling to isolated farms and stations visiting people offering emotional, spiritual and physical support.

Sally Boyd - serving with *A.F.E.S.* at Latrobe University, Bundoora Campus, ministering to students through the Christian Union.

Derrick Rufus - involved in the *Presbyterian METRO Training Program* ministering to international students at Latrobe University, Bundoora Campus.

Daryl & Soyoun Jackson - serving with *Pioneers* in South Korea at the Missionary Training Institute, helping to train Korean missionaries.

Over the years our missionaries keep us informed of their ongoing work and how God is using them in spreading the Gospel message, and it is always encouraging to hear of prayers answered and needs met.

It has been a privilege to partner with all these people that God has called to a special task in winning souls for Him, and we pray that God will continue to bless St Andrew's and our involvement with missionary outreach.

THE 1980s

Youth Group - Begins in the 1970s & continues 1980s – 2000s

Annette Harris with Steve Harris and Brian Downes

During the 70's the Reservoir Youth Group was being led by Elder George Scott and Mr Ron Hosking and regular study times and activities were held each week. With the influx of young ones from the Lyman family and other large families as well as friends joining in, the numbers increased dramatically.

In 1986 Steven Harris and Annette Harris (who had joined the Youth Group in 1980) commenced assisting with leading along-side Ron Hosking, and by God's grace, there were 25 young ones (teenagers to early 20's) joining together for fortnightly bible studies and activities on the alternate week at that time. In 1988 Brian Downes (who had joined the Youth Group as a teenager), also joined in the leadership of the Group.

Over the years various members of the congregation opened their homes for the Group to meet for regular bible studies, including the Hoskings, Tibbeys, Butchers, Millers, Websters and Pearces. A good biblical grounding was given to the group during these bible times from a variety of people, including ministers, elders, youth leaders and guest speakers. Over the years activities on the alternate week were varied and included indoor rock climbing, horse-riding, 10-pin bowling, fishing at Yea, visit to the Zoo, Hanging Rock, Sovereign Hill, Werribee Zoo, car-rallies, ice-skating, skits nights, roller-skating, tennis nights, games nights, movie nights, rowing and canoeing down the Yarra River, bike hikes, organising a 'tea for the parents' of the group and BBQ teas at Bundoora Park to name a few.

The Youth Group continued to have contact with the PFA (which is now known as PYV – Presbyterian Youth of Victoria), whether it was joining in for a weekend camp or being involved with their annual volley-ball tournament. Unfortunately they did not come home with a trophy but new friends were made and old ones caught up with!

Once a month Sunday 'Youth Lunches' were also held where a guest speaker was invited to attend and then this was followed by the group being involved in the running of the evening service. It was always encouraging to have the service well attended and supported not only by the youth but congregational members also.

Camps were also organised over long weekends. Summer-time camps included camping in tents at Phillip Island, Blairgowrie, Ayr River, Lake Eildon, Wilson's Promontory and Anglesea. Other weekends away had the Group 'staying' in the halls of Presbyterian churches around the state, including Yea, Gisborne, Kaniva, Wangaratta, Benalla, Bamawm. The Youth Group interacted with these various congregations by assisting in their worship services and joining in with their youth.

During the 80's and 90's numbers fluctuated from ~15 up to ~35 but as the teenagers became young adults they continued to join in. Many friendships were formed over the years and not only did the youth enjoy those times together but the leaders also.

As Leaders looking back over this time, it has been encouraging to know that so many young ones have come under the Gospel message and put their faith and trust in God. Christian marriages have been formed and many have gone on to serve God in different ways, some as missionaries overseas and others as ministers/Christian leaders here in Australia. God has blessed the seed that was sown in the lives of these young ones and the Leaders are thankful and grateful to have had the opportunity to serve Him in this special way.

Youth Group, Sunday School, Kid's Club, Cup Day Picnic

Jeff Harris writes:

I first attended St Andrew's in 1979 with my parents where we were warmly welcomed. It wasn't long before I had joined the **Youth Group** and had times of fun and good teaching. As time went on my learning of God's Word was slowly growing in knowledge of Him. During John Wilson's time of ministry my heart was strongly warmed and it was then that I gave my life to Jesus. I knew it wasn't my parent's faith that would save me from my sins but faith in Jesus alone. Over the years of faithful ministry by various ministers, my faith has continued to grow.

I was involved in **Sunday-School** teaching for many years and became Superintendent for a time. I also became involved with the Youth Group helping out with transport for activities and camps etc as well as enjoying the time spent with the teenagers/young adults. There was also other times of fellowship when we joined in with the (then) P.F.A. for activities or camps. Over the years I saw the Youth Group grow both in number and spiritually, for which we can only give thanks to God.

Other ministries I have been involved in was the regular Friday afternoon **Kid's Club**, which was offered to the local primary school children of Reservoir, and helping out at the St Andrew's Church's booth at Edwardes Park Lake during the local Reservoir Festival handing out show bags and Christian literature.

I continue to organise the annual family **Cup Day Picnic** at *Nioka Bush Camp* site with a BBQ and of course the surprise lolly-man for the children! This is a good time for people of the congregation, both young and old, to mix and get to know each other in Christian fellowship on a casual basis, in a great outdoor bush setting. Other duties I am involved with are being a member on the **Board** and also as a **Deacon** and I do this in service to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, trusting that God will continue to give me the strength both spiritually and physically to do His work well.

Words from Cross Cultural Missionaries

Ron and Jeanette Tibbey write:

Our first contact with St Andrew's Presbyterian Church was in the late 1970's when as cross-cultural missionaries working with the European Christian Mission to Melbourne's large international population, we were providentially placed on the St Andrew's Missionary Council monthly missionary support list. It has been a wonderful blessing to us over the years to receive such faithful, regular support.

In 1980 the Council of ECM, was led by the Lord to purchase a Mission Centre at 115 Edwardes St Reservoir (just a 100 yards down the road from St Andrew's). This home was to provide missionary accommodation, be a Mission Centre for Victoria and thirdly to accommodate the developing multi-language literature ministry that had begun to thrive.

Jeanette started to attend the RPC 7pm night service in 1980 when we first moved to Reservoir. She attended on a fairly regular basis and Ron would mind our children if he didn't have a preaching appointment. The night service was a blessing to her where she could really listen, the singing was amazing, the atmosphere was worshipful and the people friendly. Many quickly became our friends. Rev Graham Lyman was the pastor at the time teaching faithfully from God's Word. Supper in the Manse afterwards provided further fellowship.

By 1984 RPC had become home to us both, and Rev John and Paula Wilson moved into the manse and our hearts. Jeanette's involvement over the years, apart from general roster duties have been in Sunday school teaching, choir, and missionary council.

Ron's involvement with St Andrew's has been, preaching at times during the pastor-less periods, commitment to the Church's prayer meetings and Street outreach in the Reservoir shopping centre Sunday afternoons. More recently, in the years before our current pastor was appointed, he accepted the role of pastoral-carer. This involved regular visitation of aged care members, the sick and hospitalized as well as personal Bible studies with new people coming to the church services.

What the church means to us:

Jeanette: I am thankful for the faithful teaching of God's Word, the fellowship and friendship of the Lord's people and opportunities to serve in the church. The highlight in the church calendar each year was the Cantatas, the Missionary Convention with its Dinner and week of meetings, the Sunday School Anniversary production and the Picnic. A distinguishing quality of RPC has been, that whenever there has been a difficulty the people pulled together. During vacancies, everyone worked hard and were in good heart for the incoming new manse family. Because we had no other family in Victoria I always felt the church was my family. Together we have laughed, cried, planned, comforted and grown in the knowledge of God. Now in our retirement years, it is so encouraging to see young people from many different cultures

joining the church, and taking up the baton of reaching out to the next generation with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Ron: I am thankful for a Church where God's truth is faithfully proclaimed, the Gospel is presented, and there is unity amongst members. Relying on God in Prayer for both local and international needs, has always been an important part of the Churches ministry. With a third of Melbourne's population being international it is wonderful to have up to 15 different nationalities in our weekly congregational services worshipping and serving the Lord. The churches strong missionary focus for taking the gospel to all nations of the world has prepared us for our current situation. The Lord is at work in our midst by His Spirit, and the Lord Jesus Christ is building His Church at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Reservoir.

Significant Location

Stella Bromilow writes:

When I bought a unit in Ashley St in 1983 I didn't realise how significant the church on the corner would become. It has been my family through a time of unemployment and job searching, a cancer scare, CRE teaching and Operation Christmas Child. It's been good to share in various ministries over the years and to see new ventures develop e.g. the outdoor carols. Precious people have become friends and encouragers – both the young and the old. When I came here there were three services every Sunday but not a lot went on during the week. Now we have two Sunday services and something happening almost all the time!

We've had ups and downs, and have farewelled many dear saints who have gone to be with the Lord. We've welcomed a lot of newcomers from around the world. Through all the years, the most enduring characteristic of the church has been the faithful teaching of God's Word. We learn together and God is good.

'Tis Jesus the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
We'll trust Him for all that's to come.' (Joseph Hart)

THE 1990s

Finding a Warm Welcome

Ken Mc Donald writes:

We were looking around for a nearby church to attend, as we were finding it increasingly a chore to reach our usual place of worship. More importantly, Jessica was starting secondary school. We'd been warned that this was a particularly important time. If a young person hasn't a peer group to identify with at church, there is every likelihood they will be increasingly reluctant to attend. Very few other girls of Jessica's age were coming to our regular church.

Thus, one Sunday morning at 10am we washed up on the shores of St Andrew's. I can't remember much about the service. I think there may have been a choir that sang very nicely, and that the sermon was uplifting. Afterwards we stood outside for a bit (neither Lesley nor I were feeling particularly outgoing), and were prepared to drift off home. Just then a lovely lady approached and greeted us warmly, generally made us welcome and invited us to come again. We've been coming ever since. Thanks Diane!

Finding Direction in a New Church Home

David & Lois Cox write:

It was back in the 1980s that we had our first contact with St Andrew's, when we brought our 2 young children to participate in the Holiday Bible Club, held annually during the school term holidays.

In 1995 we started to look around for a new church family to join, following the hard decision to leave the church where we had both grown up, married and raised our children. Whilst still continuing our involvement in our home church, we started attending a number of evening services at churches far and wide, and finally, remembering our earlier contact, coming to St Andrew's evening service in February 1996. Our search had ended!

Immediately there were some very compelling reasons why we were drawn to this church.

- Biblical preaching and teaching, with the scriptures always front and centre.
- Emphasis on prayer and small group bible study, as a means of growth.
- Welcoming congregation, who took a genuine interest in people's lives, and their spiritual journey, with a real sense of family in fellowship.
- Acceptance of people's gifts and a willingness to have those gifts utilised in serving God within the church community.
- A real desire to reach out with the Gospel to the Reservoir community and beyond.

During these years, and on into the 2000s, the church has been involved in a number of significant Gospel outreach activities. There was the weekly **Street Ministry** outside Reservoir station on Saturday mornings, with opportunities to distribute tracts and enter into conversations with people as they passed. Some valuable contacts were made during these times, with a number of folk, particularly newcomers to our country, being drawn into our church family.

In 2003, we commenced our '**Carols on the Lawn**', outreach, just prior to Christmas. Over many years Lois and I had taken part in some wonderful musical Christmas celebrations in church, but rarely had these occasions been consciously seen as a means of reaching out to those for whom the Gospel was a closed door. As we can witness, this Carols outreach has grown from strength to strength over recent years.

Another characteristic of St Andrew's which we have witnessed over the last couple of decades is the growth of **Multicultural Ministry**. Around 2007, our smallish congregation was looking to God for direction in our ministry. Young folk from the once active Youth Group were moving away, and we seemed to be unable to revive this ministry. In God's wonderful timing we started to see a steady stream of overseas folk come into our midst. God really confirmed to us as a church family, situated in cosmopolitan Reservoir, that multicultural ministry was the way forward. The story of the development of our ESL and Welcome Centre ministries will be told later. Suffice to say that in more recent years, our God has not only blessed us with a vibrant multicultural ministry, but to that, has been added a growing ministry to young people, particularly students.

THE 2000s

Carols on the Lawn

Janice Butcher writes:

In 2001, during the ministry of Rev Chris Siriweera, the youth group organised and led the evening service once a month. In December of that year, it was Emanuel Azali and Darren Butcher's turn. They both wanted to hold a Christmas Carols evening on the lawn in front of the church.

Darren's friend Mark provided all the sound equipment. We had Scripture readings and songs that told of the birth of Jesus Christ. Supper was served in the hall afterwards.

This was the first "Christmas Carols on the Lawn" event at St Andrew's, Reservoir. And so, since then, every year in December, we have had a Christmas Carols outreach event.

Ros and Geoff Cox made a large banner to put in front of the church to advertise the event. Carol booklets were prepared. The hall was decorated with festive lights.

Each year, the event became bigger as we included new ways to advertise and reach people in the local area. It became an event where everyone in the church helped in so many different ways. Some years, the children of church families dressed up and presented the nativity story. Although sometimes challenging, the children were always a great feature.

Over the years, Reg Butcher sought to develop a sound system that would cope with the often windy conditions outside. As the crowds grew, we needed speakers down the side of the church as well. Ron Tibbey lent his public-address speakers. Reg set up a relay of speakers that hung on the fence of the church perimeter. When wind continued to be a problem, wind socks were made for the microphones.

The event received an evangelism grant from the Ministry Development Committee. This helped us to be able to do so much more. Luke and Katherine Brownley designed and ordered post cards which were printed and thousands were put in letter boxes inviting people to attend. Church folk conducted street ministry in the Reservoir shops area to tell people about Jesus and personally invite them to attend.

Then, in 2011, we decided to provide a free sausage sizzle meal before the Carols. This became a great success as people queued to receive their meal. Children's activities were introduced to occupy the kids while the sausage sizzle was on. Welcome teams were formed. A book stall was set up for anyone interested in literature. The supper in the festively decorated hall gave another opportunity to speak to new folk.

Each year the crowds grew bigger. Each year, we all worked together to produce this great event.

In 2015, Janice Butcher handed the co-ordinator's role to Derrick Jesurathinum. Together with Rev Andrew and Suzy Vines and a team of younger people, they dreamed of having the Carols event in Edwardes Park by the lake. Darebin Council approval was gained and in 2017 (last year), it was the first time the Carols were held in the park. It was a great deal of work, relocating all the equipment down there, but it was a huge success with several hundred people attending.

There are so many people who have been involved over 18 years. The welcomers, the presenters, the music team (with grateful help from Donvale, Valley PCs, the local Salvo musicians), the sound team, everyone who carried chairs and equipment and then carried it back again, the BBQ workers, the supper teams, everyone who brought food and then cleaned up afterwards and the many people who worked behind the scenes.

God has blessed this amazing ministry which was started by the youth group in 2001 and has grown into a great evangelistic outreach to all of Reservoir.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Class

Lois Cox writes:

It's a very courageous and yet frightening thing to migrate to a new country and not be able to communicate easily in emergencies, in the simple everyday tasks, in applying for a job and in many different situations.

It was in 2006 that I believe God planted in me the desire to start reaching out to international people who were struggling with their English. Once I was free, after caring for elderly parents, I made it known to our minister Rev Ross Tucker that I would like to advertise for students. As it turned out, I didn't even need to advertise. On the very day that I was going to say I was ready to start, we had a request from a Korean Pastor. He asked to share our buildings for worship and to provide English teaching for some of his congregation. I believed that was not a coincidence, but a confirmation that God really wanted this ministry to start. Initially we met in the Board room with 13 Korean students. Over the past 12 years, the class has grown considerably. We are now averaging in the 30's, with people from many different nations.

What a joy it is to realise that a considerable number of our congregation have had their first association with the church through ESL, have come to know Jesus, been baptised and fully integrated into the life of our church. We want to give God all the glory for what He is doing amongst us.

It is a team effort. Some care for children of students and others share the teaching load, while others wash up after morning tea.

I hope you will enjoy hearing from the students as you read their contributions below.

Contributions from some past and present ESL students

Two years ago, my family left China to come to Australia, Melbourne. At that time I found it was very difficult for me to communicate with a local resident. I even could not say a simple word in English. I doubted, and thought that coming to Australia was a wrong decision. I realized that improving English skill was my most important and urgent thing to do.

I came to Reservoir Presbyterian Church learning English by chance. At beginning, I felt that I could not follow what you taught. Andrew, David & Lois and other volunteers are so great and patient. Especially you are very kind to every learners. We enjoy the class very much. In the class we have learned many useful and interesting knowledge. For example, Australia history- ANZAC Day etc. In addition, easy Bible stories teach us to consider what is the meaning of life. Also English materials we received are so useful, we can review it at home. Now I feel so happy that my English level has improved significantly. I can express my opinion in English confidently. I cannot express my thanks in words.

Fang

I love this English class, because there are very caring and kind teachers. They teach us for free and have much patience and love. Through their benevolent actions one can see God's love at work.

Rebekah

I am interested in the English language. I would love to learn English to talk to people here, because they talk English. I would like to learn English to be able to find a job.

Monireh

About more than one year ago, I walked across the Edwardes St and knew there are free English classes in this church. I walked in and started to study English. The teachers are very nice and patient to us. I have learned a lot from the class and which are very useful. I want to say thank you teachers and I will continue study here and learn more.

Yourong

I like this church, because the teachers are very kind and look like my family members. I continue come here study English. Thank you very much!

Lina

I began to learn English in this class for the third year and I feel happy because my English is a little better than before. So I like to continue the class to improve a little more, because my English is poor and I happy in future to speak a little better.

Frank

Praise the Lord for giving me the opportunity to get familiar with Lois' English class in Reservoir Church six years ago where I heard God's true word for the first time. Our Heavenly Father who has compassion and love about his people rather than what I heard in my Islamic country. I believe salvation is faith in Jesus Christ who will bring joy and peace in our life.

Farzaneh

I remember when Donya and I were looking for an English class and found one in Reservoir which was closer to us at the time. Yes that was Reservoir Presbyterian Church. It was free and for any levels. We were so happy. First day I think was in 2013 and we were so excited we could find a class. Andrew and Lois were so kind and welcoming to anybody at the class which was so nice of them. We learned English from proper books and they were so professional to teach it to be honest. At the end of the class they gave us a new book which wasn't familiar to me and I never had seen it. Yes, it was the Bible. Then we read some verses but I felt a kind of weird feeling and my heart pumped like a 1000 times per second. It was like I wanted to read all of them in one day and I did. Just started to ask a lot of questions about Jesus and His kingdom.

I attended most of Andrew's easy English Bible studies on Tuesdays. It took mostly 7 or 9 months to believe, but I felt it in my heart and then I was baptised at Easter. I was over the moon and now on remembering those days, happy tears come and I am proud I have found the right way. Yes ESL class, especially Andrew and Lois were a big part of this journey and also people of the church who have done amazing things for us. At the end I want to say Thank You All and may the Lord bless you.

Behnam

Recording God's Word and sharing it

first to Reservoir and now to the World

Reg Butcher writes:

I have always been interested in things electronic; radio, television, sound, and all the workings behind these electronic "gadgets". Huge advancements have been made in these areas over the years.

Soon after Rev Graham Lyman arrived at Reservoir in 1977, I felt there was a need to be able to share God's Word with those in the congregation who were unable to attend worship because of age or illness.

So, each Sunday morning and evening, a cassette recorder was set up in the church to record the sermons. The church at that time did not use a pulpit microphone. Graham Lyman did not need one. So, a microphone was positioned in the pulpit area to take the sound to the recorder. At first, I sat in the far corner of the upstairs section; there was a power point close by.

The cassette tapes were prepared, labelled and placed in a rack ready to be shared, either by someone who wanted to listen to the message again or to take to someone who was not able to get to church. This ministry has been well used and has been a blessing to many over the years.

Throughout this time, some of the young men in the congregation helped, taking turns to do the recording.

The recording section was then moved to the back row corner downstairs. This area was also too cramped. However, there was great celebration when the broom cupboard under the stairs was enlarged/modified to become the sound room as well. Multiple cassette recorders were purchased so there would be several tapes available each week due to the demand. These tapes were recycled as they were returned.

But technology doesn't stand still. Digital recording became the way of the future and as the world wide web developed, I set up a St Andrew's church website, with assistance from Mike Wharton. It was now possible to load sermons onto our church website for anyone with the necessary technology to connect to it. Computers in the home were still not common at that stage. It would be some time before that would happen.

Now we have a tech team which Rubin William convenes, multiple microphones, a sound mixer, additional cables laid under the church and a video link to the cry room. A bigger team, praise God and more sophisticated equipment.

In 2014, Rev Andrew Vines together with Tanya Robertson (nee Siriweera) did a major upgrade of the church website. This was a great deal of work. The advancement in technology

means that people can use their mobile phones or tablets to access the church site, the church news, the church calendar and to listen to sermons.

Now, each Sunday, I come home with a digital recorder which is about the size of a spectacle case. I edit and balance the sound and then load it on to the church website at www.reservoirpc.org.au

Anyone, anywhere in the world who has internet access can now listen to God's Word as it was preached at St Andrew's Reservoir. Even if on holiday in another country, you can still listen to the sermon.

It's been a great privilege to serve the Lord in this way for over 40 years, to see how advancing technology has enabled God's Word, as recorded, to be heard first in Reservoir... and now in the uttermost parts of the world!

Jesus said: Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation. Mark 16:15

2010 AND ONWARDS

Rebekah Loh

Arrived from Malaysia to study at La Trobe University

Came to Reservoir PC mid 2015

Became a communicant member on 20th March 2016

This is her story (used with permission)

My name is Rebekah, but most people here know me as Bek. I recently graduated from La Trobe University with a degree in Dietetics. I'm starting to look for jobs in between volunteering with SecondBite and the English classes organised by RPC. I grew up in Penang, Malaysia with my parents, younger sister and brother. When I want to take my mind off things, I like to read, listen to music, play sports/games (physical or digital), or watch YouTube videos. It depends on my mood of what I feel like doing at that time.

I grew up in a Christian family, but my parents have always told us as children that our faith is not transferable just because our parents are Christian. We had to trust God and allow Jesus to rule our lives by our own decision. I gave my life to Christ when I was very young, maybe about 5 or 6 years old and have never regretted that decision. I've been attending RPC for about two-and-a-half years now.

At that time I believe Isaac, Linden and Dami, Rachel Harris and Grace Middleton were the only uni students/young people around, besides some other working adults. It has been encouraging to see how the congregation then welcomed us and continued welcoming the many people who started coming after that, speaking of which, it's been great to see how God has been growing His church here in Reservoir!

Calista Ng

Arrived from Singapore to study at La Trobe University

Came to Reservoir PC mid 2015

This is her reflection!

Reservoir Presbyterian Church.

St Andrews Presbyterian Church?

Haha, it still confuses me a little sometimes.

Do I sit on the long blue cushion,

Or is it for my back?

I still wonder about it sometimes.

“Great is th-“ oops
“Great is Your faithfulness, O God my Father,
There-” oops,
“You have fulfilled every promise to me”
Still throws me off sometimes.

The brown pews lined up one after another,
The little heating vents alternating between the pews,
The little green REJOICE books,
Next to the bigger brown bibles.
But my favourite has to be
The big brown cross that lies centre to the church building.

It’s just like our church, this cross.
At RPC I see people who seek to have the cross centre to their lives, centre to this community.
I’m from Singapore, and next to me sits
an Australian, Malaysian, Iranian, Mongolian (just to name a few).
I’m a student at university, and around me I find
Teachers, lawyers, salesmen and women, gardeners.
I’m in my twenties, and here I meet
People of all ages – those who’ve lived less than a year, up to those who’ve lived more than three times as long as I have.
But more importantly, gathered at RPC are
my brothers and sisters in Christ.
Born and raised somewhere different from me,
Living and experiencing things different from me,
But all brought into God’s family through Jesus Christ.

May this big brown cross not just be centre to the church building
But centre to this community,
May our differences be resolved at the cross,
And God’s spirit in us unite this church.
May the arms, and feet, and lips, and eyebrows of this church
Come to be one body,
That He may be made known to all!

By: Calista Ng, child of God, sister to you in Christ, toenail of this body of Christ! ☺

Xin Xin Peng (Tim)

PhD student (Physics) La Trobe University

Arrived in Australia from China in November 2016 and soon after came to Reservoir PC.

Became a communicant member on August 27th 2017

This is his confession of faith (with permission)

I came to know Christianity and met a real Christian first time in my life in 2012, when one of my classmates was diagnosed of blood cancer, and whole class members were seeking help for him zealously. In that time I happened to know several Christians in my university who I thought would be kind for donations. And they invited me to their bible study on Friday night. When I came there, I found the study was very relaxed and interactive unlike any official events I attended before. They were then studying the Sermon on the Mount in Gospel of Matthew. One brother asserted “No knowledge in the world like psychology or eudemonics can be as meaningful as the sermons on the mount”, with which I didn’t agree at all. I was then just thinking how to convert these stupid guys. I acted like a troublemaker at the study, claiming that “In fact Human beings ourselves are God”, “the story of Angels and demons are fabricated by people deliberately” and so on. I still remember that I was feeling proud of my intelligence then. Finally the study was finished with the prayer of the brother, and I closed my eyes to follow their example. Though I thought they were speaking to the air, the brother acted like there was indeed a God he was praying to. When I went into the open air with them after the study, I felt that the air was so clean, and my eyes were even brighter. I talked a lot with the brother on the way to my dormitory. On that night God challenged me, and refreshed my life through their words. And I have not been so relaxed for a long time.

I was then extremely anxious about the decision whether to apply for postgraduate study or a job. Besides, I was still living in the shadow of breaking up with my ex-girlfriend half a year ago. This relationship made me live in regret and pain for a long time. I made several promises during the relationship, and even I myself knew that they were all lies in order to satisfy my lust. One time My mom called me, “your dad and me are still looking forward to a better life brought by you!” My mom was always sensitive to the change in the heart of her son, and she knew that her son was indeed living in despair for a long time. My mom’s words touched me deeply. I know there are still responsibility on my shoulder as a son, and how can I fulfill filial duty if I live in my own world to be so desperate all day? I even cannot survive this severe depression.

My life was totally messy then, I have to find a reliable mental crutch apart from myself. I have to admit that I go to find God with some motivation. I thought maybe the God they believed in was a good choice for me, and I can change my life through him. When I call back this experience, God indeed directed me to him with several mysterious ways.

I was born in a traditional Chinese family, and my dad was a mystic to some extent. So I didn't feel unacceptable when the Christians talked about miracles. I took part in their morning quiet time, and went to the church every Sunday. And I didn't reject the idea that we all need God's salvation because of my obvious failure in life before. Anyway I should struggle to live firstly. So I settled in the fellowship in my uni quickly. However, I haven't had any direct communication with God then.

When I became an adult, I developed a philosophy that I should lay all of my life on the foundation of myself, and I found how strong and powerful my self-awareness is. I can believe in myself whatever I am going through, and everything can be produced from my inner world. I consider myself as a self-sustain system, and to communicate with outside world is only a necessary method to keep the system running. I was then so deeply drowning in my own world stubbornly, and judging everything with my limited and narrow mind. Obviously my theory was wrong, for I always felt extremely painful, lonely and meaningless.

It was such a man of stony heart that begins to be changed step by step by God's love, though it really took long time.

One Sunday there was a sermon regarding Chapter 51 of Psalms, in which King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. I suddenly felt so vividly how eager I was to wipe away my sins. I was afraid of darkness, and always harmed myself because of the sins. But God used David's example to let me know that Jesus had died for my sins, and was waiting for my sincere repentance. I was aware of how ugly my heart was even before I knew Jesus, but by whom can my sins be washed and by which kind of power can I rely on to get rid of these sins?

But David's song of repentance made me know that only God was my refuge, only the work done by Jesus on Cross can give me strength to remove all of my sins. I was able to confess my sins to God honestly at last, and put down all the burden. I was always addicted in lust and consider it as the only source of power and happiness in life. Also I was always full of dark ideas. Sometimes I was so arrogant that there were no reasons for other person in the world to live except for me, and sometimes I was so inferior that all the successful person around me were threaten to me. Thanks to God, I gradually surrendered to God's grace, and didn't regard my prayer as useless as just speaking to the air, and I can feel that God was really listening to me. God would look after my weakness, and wipe out all my sins. Sometimes, I was observing my prayer objectively, just thought it was only the religious ritual that deceived myself as well as others. But God was speaking to me in my heart that "Don't be afraid my child, impossible is nothing for me, and I am sure to rescue you".

The power of God destroys the castle I built for myself again and again, and makes me live in peace and joy. Oh my Lord, you have died for me, now let me only live for you. The heart of your child is full of every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. So please cleanse me by yourself, and I am faithful to wait for you until the final day.

Odgerel Ganbold (Odko)

Arrived in Melbourne from Mongolia as a student in 2015.

Came to Reservoir PC in May 2016

Became a communicant member on 10th September 2017

This is her testimony (with permission)

Since the age of 4 months, I had been struggling with skin diathesis. The Buddhist lama, temples, special hot springs and the best medical help could bring no clue to my bleeding skin. As a last resort my mum brought me to a local church. (that was the time when the first missionaries came to spread the gospel and plant churches in Mongolia after the Soviet Union collapsed). Since then, my mum believed Jesus and would pray for me: Father, please give my daughter a good night's sleep tonight and may you heal her skin, spotless like a peeled onion.... Although I was a little girl I believed and sensed that one to whom the prayer sent had something different than human made, scary gods in temples. My skin got better and better day by day. That was the first time I knew Jesus and kept Him in my heart.

Unfortunately, due to my parents' relationship issues we stopped going to the church. They were so absorbed with those issues that they didn't pay attention to me and my siblings for our future and upbringing. Thus, I learnt from my school teachers that to be a good person I needed to study hard. I took it, yet it made me less friendly, competitive and selfish to become No1 student. Achievement after achievement I felt more burden than happiness and joy.

In 2003, when I was 15, my brother's university friend shared the gospel with me. I did not understand some of the things he talked about Jesus, but he seemed very happy and content with life. Something I realised wasn't achieved by studying hard. Yet, doubts in Christianity and Jesus were still in me. Is He really the good God? Can He lead my life well? Does He really love? Bible verses seemed to prove them but I needed the proofs and experience those in my life. Yet, I wanted to be like the good Christians I met at Christian Union.

After my university graduation in 2009, the year of the world's great financial crisis, it was difficult to find a job in the capital city and for the sake of ease I went to my hometown. In the following 2 years, I became like the lost son: one of the parables in the bible. I was diverted from God and the Christian community because of busy work. My workplace and living with my parents became causes of stress. I searched relief & happiness from night clubs and friendships, which turned out to be bad ones. My money, time and strength were spent mainly on clothes and entertainments, which I hoped would make me feel better and happier. Though it was the opposite. My life became meaningless and I started seeing my future as a blur.

Luckily, the dream of my childhood, studying overseas, led me to make the decision to leave my job to study English in Ulaanbaatar. My mum was willing to support me but my dad was not. Although it seemed feasible at first, in reality It was the riskiest decision in my life: if I could get the score needed. At the moment of realising myself becoming no one: jobless, and with inadequate English and broken, God came to my mind. I prayed and cried out to the Lord

on my knees: 'God I'm no one now, I've been against you. Please, take me out of the mess I made? I have no power over this. After much crying, the next day through the worship song called 'He makes a way where there seems no way' I trusted that he will surely make a way in this situation. At the same time, God told my mum 'Odko can do. Tell her 'be only with Me'. Day after day He guided by his words and gave wisdom. However, sometimes my old way of living tried to drag me from God and I sometimes met bad friends. Every time I met them I felt guilty before God.

One day I was travelling to my hometown, but I was involved in a car accident on the way. The car I was in went off the road and hit a rock and rolled once and turned upside down. I thought my life was ending. God must be punishing me because I couldn't be good and I'm now going to hell, I thoughtMiraculously, I felt like I was in the vacuum of space: nothing sharp hit me. When I opened my eyes I was alive without even small scratches on me. Having deeply experienced His love, the proof I needed, through this, I decided to follow Him with no doubt. I have understood the grace of God in Jesus, I didn't deserve his mercy and forgiveness, but out of his love he has poured out his mercy on me.

Turning back to my English study story, when it was a month away from the English test date, I discovered that my dad whom I wholly trusted had been cheating my whole family for many years and planned his second life. Clearly, the test preparation seemed impossible in this deep heartbrokenness. Yet, God promised 7 score upon my mum's prayer about my intention to cancel the test. I believed it and prayerfully studied in the midst of the darkest moment of my life. On the test result day, the result paper would read the 7 promised!!!. I burst into tears as I deeply experienced God is alone trustworthy in his promises which my earthly father failed to be.

Since 2015 the year I came to Australia, God has been the closest one I could reach whenever I needed as I came here alone. A close and individual relationship with God has been growing since then. Of course, FOCUS and Reservoir Presbyterian church has played the main part teaching His words and bringing Christian fellowship in my faith journey. He has blessed me with friendships and the ability to live here. I'm 200% certain in my salvation because of what God has done for me in Jesus. Now I want to devote my life to Jesus, and live to please him as my Lord and Saviour.

(My mum, siblings and I are all Christian now. And we always pray that one day my dad would trust in Jesus and turn to him in repentance.)

Uuriintsolmon Javkhlan (Ure)

Arrived in Melbourne from Mongolia as a student in 2015.

Came to Reservoir PC in March 2016

Became a communicant member on 17th October 2017

This is her story. (with permission)

Hi my name is Uuriintsolmon Javkhlan (yes that is my name, it means 'morning-star'). People call me Ure. I am an international student from Mongolia and this is my third year at Latrobe University and at Reservoir Presbyterian church. Hopefully, I will be graduating from my degree in International Relations by the end of this year. My family is back in Mongolia and to my surprise, my brother is also coming down here for his studies. Both of my parents are lecturers at the Union Bible Theological College in Ulaanbaatar and have been working there for the last 10 years. I was raised up in a Christian family and am considered a second generation Christian in Mongolia. Christianity is very young and new as it entered effectively in Mongolia after the collapse of the Soviet Union back in the 1990s'. Just because I grew up in a Christian family did not merely make me a Christian, but it obviously impacted my understanding and growth in my faith in the Lord. God gradually allowed me to see him clearer and clearer as the years went by and proved that He existed and that He loved me.

When my family was in the Philippines when I was younger, we had the chance to go to an international community church and I really enjoyed attending Sunday schools there. I learnt sooo much from the Bible stories and characters. I remember also that I wondered why my parents always read the Bible first thing in the morning. They did this every time before they had breakfast and often told me and my brother to do the same. I didn't quite understand why we had to until one day I started reading from Ezekiel (an odd book to start reading from the Bible, but it worked!). I realized how much I wanted to read more and more and soon understood that the Word of God was so living and active and full of TRUTH and LIFE and the urgency to share this with my friends overwhelmed me.

Anyway, I see and understand that God has been working in every season of my life and has been made known to me more about what it means to LIVE as a true follower and disciple of Christ since I came to Australia. No works of men can bring salvation but only by grace that comes through faith in Christ Jesus. (I love what Gal 2:20 says too) This is my third year at Reservoir Pressy and I have enjoyed every bit of it. I find Resy Pressy a place where everyone is welcomed whoever they may be. The church also provides a platform for people to grow in their knowledge of who God is on a deeper level and provides ways to serve others in as well as outside the church. I love the sermons taught on Sundays as well as the Bible studies that run during the week. I learn so much wisdom from the people at Reservoir church in which they serve one another in love and build one another in words and good will. I am fully blessed throughout these years!

Stacy Chan

Arrived in Melbourne from Mauritius to study at La Trobe University

Came to Reservoir PC in September 2017

Bonzour! I'm Stacy and I come from a small tropical island (off the coast of Madagascar) called Mauritius where we speak English, French and Mauritian creole. My family is currently still living there but have been supporting me throughout my studies. I am also the eldest (but the shortest) among my siblings. I have recently graduated from La Trobe University in December 2017 and my plan is to stay here for at least another 2 years to work. While waiting to get employed as a physiotherapist, I have been enjoying meeting up with friends as well as new people from Thursday's English class, reading, doing a bit of painting, learning how to drive and just very recently learning how to play Ukulele (Thanks to my housemate Belle!).

I have been blessed to have heard about Jesus since birth as my mom and dad became Christians as young adults. But God was a distant god for most of my teenage life as I thought of Him as a judge wanting to assess my every deeds. I felt very proud to appear moral and good but felt crushed when I did not live up to my own expectations. However, God has been graciously patient with me and showed me through the Bible, other Christian friends and circumstances, that He is a loving father who sent his son to live the perfect life I could never ever live (and die a death I surely deserved). While I often fail and rely on my own abilities, I am reminded that Jesus' only desire for me is to look at his sacrifice on the cross and know that through Him, God still calls me his beloved child.

It has really been encouraging to be at Reservoir Presbyterian since September 2017. I have met brothers and sisters in Christ from around the globe who are passionate about God and who seek to live according to His will in their lives. They genuinely pursue God in everything they do and are open about the sacrifices that God has asked them to make to follow Him.

Rishabh Alexander (Alex)

Arrived in Australia from India to study at La Trobe University

Came to Reservoir PC in August 2016

Hello!! My name is Rishabh Alexander, people here know me as Alex. I'm from New Delhi (capital city of INDIA); I came to Australia for studies about 2 years ago. My family consists of four members including: my father, mother and elder brother (all of them are in India). Before coming here, I was working as an Event Coordinator for ONLY MUCH LOUDER (company's name). I completed my Masters in Human Resource Management from La Trobe University and currently I'm working part-time. In my free time, I enjoy watching Basketball, going to live music gigs and playing guitar.

I was born into a catholic family. Along the way, a lot of personal things and life experiences triggered a change about my understanding of Christianity. I was asking a lot of questions of myself, of God and of life, and I was just looking for answers. I started to explore what other religions had to say on God and life. I was just searching for God. That's when I reached out to my local church (in INDIA). I also started to read Bible with two of my Christian friends, which was very helpful at the time to understand the Christian message. Through reading scriptures I finally understood that Christianity is the only religion which talked about forgiveness and having relationship with God, I also understood that God cared enough about humankind that he came down to the earth and provided a way for us to be in a right relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

I have been part of Reservoir Presbyterian for about year and half now. I got connected to Reservoir Presbyterian through FOCUS. Reservoir Presbyterian has been very helpful in my Christian journey as now I have much more deeper understanding of the gospel through Church's teaching. There is also a sense of community in the church as people genuinely care for each other.

Viral and Rubin Solanki

Arrived in Australia from India in 2014

Became communicant members at Reservoir PC on 20th December 2015

This is the first Church we went to after coming to Australia from India. We were overwhelmed with the love and care bestowed on us by the church family. This church stands true to Christian principles and has helped us in growing deeper in our faith. We are happy to be a part of this church and the opportunities provided to serve in whatever way we can.

Elyssa Neo

Arrived in Australia from Singapore to study at La Trobe University

Came to Reservoir PC in October 2016

So flawed, So loved

Reflecting on my time here in RPC, I am thankful that the LORD has opened my eyes to the family I have in Christ. This family that I've been adopted into, is not based on race or nationality, not based on age or gender, not based on educational status or occupation, but purely by the grace and mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ. Through RPC, I've learnt that Christianity is not about the way service is ran, or about the type of music that is played, neither is it about denomination. It's more than that. I've learnt to look past the differences, and focus on what really matters – the people. What we share in common is that we are, so flawed but so loved. May many more that come through RPC recognise and understand that it is not about how good and perfect we are, but how good and perfect He is. 😊

Amir Kashani

First came to Reservoir PC in June 2013

Baptised in October 2013

Inducted as an Elder in April 2017

Hi my family in Christ

This is Amir Kashani. I came to Australia as a Refugee. While I was living in Reservoir, I searched for Free English classes and I found a church that had a free English class. When I went to Reservoir Presbyterian Church, I met a nice couple (the Butchers), they had contact with the Minister of Reservoir Church. Then I met Andrew Vines. We went to English class and I met another nice couple (the Coxes). They were teachers in the ESL class. They accepted me just like their family.

We read some chapters from the Bible and they explained for us about those chapters. Then I asked Andrew about the Bible and Christianity. He suggested that I read Matthew and then think about that book. That was very exciting for me and after that he started teaching me the Word of God.

The first time when I went to church, I felt a peace in my life that I hadn't had before. Then people in the church accepted me just the same as family. They prayed for me every day and encouraged me. After that, in 2013, I was baptized. Now I'm a Christian. I want to say thank you Father for your Son, our LORD and Saviour. You sent Him to the cross without any sin and He died for us and for our sin and after three days He rose again.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

St Andrew's Welcome Centre



Doug and Diane Brownley write:

It was early 2015 that Doug thought we needed to help the people who had started coming to our Church but did not have Visas to work. Some were lonely and frustrated as they couldn't speak English very well and there was not much they could do with their time.

The idea of a drop-in Centre was nurtured and in April we commenced the St. Andrew's STA Welcome Centre – STA being an acronym for Seek, Talk and Activities as well as our Church's initials.

Meeting in the Church Hall, the Centre is open during the school terms each Tuesday from 1pm to 4pm.

We aim to have a friendly and welcoming place to show the love of Jesus to those who walk through the door. We've had some interesting conversations talking about Christianity as the opportunity arises.

The Centre is there for anyone that would enjoy some company, a chat, play a game, use the internet and computers or share a coffee or tea. We've had fun making pancakes and dumplings and also sampling yummy homemade spring rolls. We have had a number of people come, through going to English Class on Thursdays, wanting to practise their English. There have been many nationalities of people coming along. Some attend each week, some occasionally and some come and go. Often people stop coming when they are doing a course in English.

An encouragement for us has been some of them say they love coming and miss it when we don't meet during the holidays. It's been great to have the support of Andrew & Suzy who call in most weeks to have a chat and also Claudio and Fernanda who are wonderful at engaging people in conversation. We thank the Lord for this opportunity of service.

A FINAL WORD

Our Pastor & Minister Rev Andrew Vines

I don't think I even knew where Reservoir was before we visited this church. (Suzy did, she'd been once before).

We were on home assignment at the end of 2012, after a fairly tumultuous couple of years in the Middle East, and John Wilson had approached us about coming and serving Jesus here. Though we were warmly welcomed on our first visit (even had an invitation to go to lunch!), we eventually decided that we were going back to the Middle East. God however, had other plans.

When it became clear that we would probably be in Melbourne at least until September 2013, we decided that we may as well make ourselves useful while we were here, and offered to come and do some part-time ministry. We were still very worn out from our time overseas, but immediately God began using us even in our weakness.

Before too long we had to pinch ourselves, as there was a lounge room full of new Christians, (and not-yet-Christians) from five different countries. One day, I literally had someone knock on the door asking: "Is there anyone here who can tell me about Jesus?" Not only this, but we were assisted by godly believers who were eager to nurture these newcomers in the gospel.

And so what should we do? Could we leave these new believers behind? We spoke to our elders in our home church in Surrey Hills, asking their advice about a couple of options overseas. They told us frankly they didn't think we were ready to go back, that we needed more recovery time. It was soon after this that Reservoir formally put in a call. And so, as I think I have said before, it felt a bit like the apostle Paul's experience in Acts 16:6-10. When, at the Presbytery meeting "The Call" was placed in my hand, it was like the man from Macedonia who said: "Come over and help us!" And so we concluded that God had called us to preach the gospel in Reservoir.

That's some of our story. I don't know how to reflect on the many individuals who have encouraged us along the way. I am thankful for the team of elders I work with, men who love Jesus. John Wilson has been a wise and encouraging mentor. Ron Tibbey as pastoral worker introduced me to many of the elderly in our congregation. Daryl Jackson helped us to train up new elders. Paul Huynh has made a significant contribution in establishing our evening congregation. Our team of deacons has helped us all to care for many. Our ESL classes are a highlight of my week. But there's too many others to list them all: we all share in the glorious ministry of the gospel.

And so where to next? We've got to keep being the same, and keep being new. That is, we've got to stick to the basics of good doctrine, commitment to prayer, loving each other in practical ways, and welcoming newcomers. And we've got to keep being new: keep looking for fresh ways to reach the lost around us, to teach them the gospel and bring them to maturity in Christ.

As we look back on the past: All glory to God! And as we look to the future: All glory to God!



APPENDIX 1

MINISTERS OF ST ANDREW'S RESERVOIR SINCE 1993

Rev John Wilson	Called from Numurkah	1984 – 1995
Rev David Capill	Called from Rochester	1996 – 1997
Rev Chris Siriweera	Called from Noorat	1998 – 2002
Rev Ross Tucker	Called from Newcastle NSW	2004 – 2009
Rev Andrew Vines	Returned from Missionary service	2013 - present

ELDERS FROM 1993

INDUCTED

Mr Tom Liddell	1965
Mr Ron Webster	1971
Mr Brindley Vanderwert	1972
Mr Graeme Miller	1976 (retired) (Session Clerk 2000 – 2017)
Mr Jac Louws	1981
Mr Ian Downes	1987 (retired)
Mr Reg Butcher	1987 Presently serving
Mr Steven Harris	1996 Presently serving
Mr David Cox	2001 Presently serving as Session Clerk
Mr Brian Downes	2001
Mr Isaac Evans	2017 Presently serving
Mr Amir Kashani	2017 Presently serving

Centenary Booklet

CELEBRATING 100
YEARS OF GOD'S GRACE

1918 - 2018



st andrews
presbyterian church
reservoir

