

FOR THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST
WHO HAS RESURRECTED ME

VISION

Our Prayerful Plan For The Future





Very truly I tell you,
the one who believes
has eternal life.

John 6:47

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Our Story

(the short version)



Our story as a church began over 70 years ago in the Brisbane YMCA building as the First Reformed Church of Brisbane. Following a series of big decisions, bold moves, and devastating setbacks, a group of passionate European migrants and local Queenslanders sensed God's leading to move to Bray Park, emboldened by the vision to start a Christian school and to reach more people with the good news of Jesus.

Our current block of land on Youngs Crossing Road was purchased and the current building was constructed, creating a new home for both Bray Park Reformed Church (as we were then known) and the newly formed Genesis Christian College. The sacrifices made by many to see this vision come to reality are numerous and inspiring. There were countless meetings, working bees, cake stalls, and many other acts of service. We are here today, 30 years later, because of God's unwavering faithfulness and the sacrificial devotion of those who have gone before us.

Of course, some things have changed in the last 30 years. There is now a formal

separation between church and school, though there continues to be a warm ongoing relationship and a shared commitment to the mission of Christ. There has been a name change (to Bray Park Community Church), as well as updates and extensions to our building. But other, more important things haven't changed. We still proclaim the same Bible, we still seek to show the same love, and we still cherish the same resolve as those who have gone before us; to advance the mission of God and to share the message of Christ in our community.

It is with the same pioneering spirit of our forebears that we now cast our eyes forward to what the future might hold for us as a church. It is with the same prayerful dependence that we look to God to do what only he can do; to give growth and to bring more people into His glorious kingdom through the work of His Son and by the power of His Spirit. It is with the same deep desire that we ask God to do more among us than we could ever ask, think, or imagine; for our good and, above all, for His glory.

Our Purpose



When someone comes to faith in Jesus, the Bible says they have crossed over *“from death to life”* (John 5:24). Jesus once said, *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10). We have discovered this for ourselves. We have received true and lasting life in Jesus and we are captured by the vision of seeing more people find real life in Him.

We are a group of ordinary people from all walks of life who have found real and lasting life in Jesus. We didn't earn it and we don't deserve it, but we have freely received it as a gift of God's grace. And the best news is that you can too!

The heartbeat of our life together and our collective purpose is:

**To help
more
people
find
life in
Jesus**

Our Priorities



Life in Jesus

Life in Jesus is life lived in relationship with God, both now and forever. This gift of life is received through faith in Jesus and leads to a life lived for the glory of God

Life together

Life together is life lived in community with the people of God. When we come to faith in Jesus we become an active part of God's people and our new family, the church

Life for others

Life for others is a life devoted to helping others come to know Jesus. We follow the example of Jesus by loving others as we obey his command to go as his witnesses into the world



Life in Jesus

Life in Jesus is life lived in relationship with God, both now and forever. This gift of life is received through faith in Jesus and leads to a life lived for the glory of God.

We enjoy life in Jesus in the following ways:

**Trusting in
Jesus' finished
work**

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

**Walking in
step with
God's Spirit**

(Galatians 5:25)

**Growing in
knowledge of
God's Word**

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Deepening our
devotion to
prayer**

(Philippians 4:6)

We will pursue and practice life in Jesus in the following ways:

**Weekly, faithful, gospel-
centred exposition of
God's Word**

**Write Bible study
questions to accompany
each sermon**

**Encourage and equip
people to engage
in regular spiritual
rhythms**

**Encourage and
equip discipleship
relationships**

**Provide annual training
courses in key areas of
discipleship**

**Host quarterly prayer
gatherings**

**Elders to hold monthly
prayer meetings**



Life Together

Life together is life lived in community with the people of God. When we come to faith in Jesus we become an active part of God's people and our new family, the church.

We share **life together** in the following ways:

Meeting together regularly

(Hebrews 10:24-25)

Building genuine relationships

(John 13:34)

Using our gifts to serve

(Romans 12:1-8)

Giving joyfully and generously

(2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

We will **pursue and practice life together** in the following ways:

Hold weekly, gospel-centred **worship gatherings**

Provide **opportunities for connection** before or after worship gatherings

Host **Connect Sunday** on the first Sunday of each month

Run **various ministries** that provide a place for connection and growth

Encourage and equip all members to be involved in a **Growth Group**

Provide resources for Growth Groups, including **leaders training** and **study guides**

Encourage all members to be involved in a **service team**

Provide **opportunities to serve** in various ministry and service teams

Teach, model, and encourage **gospel generosity**

Provide **quarterly financial updates**



Life for Others

Life for others is a life devoted to helping others come to know Jesus. We follow the example of Jesus by loving others as we obey his command to go as his witnesses into the world.

**We give our life
for others in the
following ways:**

**Know and tell
the gospel**

(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

**Engage with
gentleness and
respect**

(1 Peter 3:15)

**Seek the
good of our
community**

(Jeremiah 29:4-7)

**Pursue and
promote justice**

(Micah 6:8)

**We will pursue
and practice life
for others in the
following ways:**

Teach, model and
encourage **prayer for
the lost**

Teach, model, and
encourage **personal
evangelism**

Host the **Alpha Course**
bi-annually

Provide **opportunities
to serve** our local
community and world

Provide **opportunities
to pursue justice** in our
community and world

Partner with **external
organisations**, including
New Life Orphanage
and Compassion

Our Values

To accomplish these priorities,
we cherish, protect, and
promote the following values:





Biblically Grounded

Gospel Focused

Servant Hearted

Outward Looking

Better Together

Biblically Grounded

We are committed to clear teaching from the Bible because it reveals who God is and what He has done for us, and contains all that we need to know God and to live for Him. We seek to grow in our understanding of the Bible and to apply its truth to every area of life (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:16; 4:1-2; Hebrews 4:12)

Gospel Focused

We are centred on the gospel because it is the overarching message of the Bible, the power of God for salvation, and the fuel for Christian living. The gospel is the announcement that Jesus is Lord and in him there is forgiveness of sins, adoption into God's family, and life with God forever (Luke 24:44-47; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Servant Hearted


We are servants because Jesus served us and called us to go and do likewise. We seek to serve others by adopting an attitude of humility that reflects the heart and example of Christ (Matthew 23:11; Luke 10:25-37; Galatians 5:13)

Outward Looking

We are sent into the world as witnesses to the good news about Jesus and God's coming kingdom. We want to be a welcoming, authentic and accessible community to new followers of Jesus and to those who are searching for the hope and life that can be found only in him (Psalm 96:3 Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15-16)

Better Together

We are graciously adopted into God's family through the finished work of Jesus and the unifying presence of God's Spirit. We seek to live out our new identity as brothers and sisters by gathering together regularly to love, serve, support, and encourage one another (1 Corinthians 12:15-27; Ephesians 4:1-16; Hebrews 10:25)



And this is the
testimony: God has
given us eternal
life, and this life is
in his Son.

1 John 5:11

Our Goals

We commit ourselves to pursue the following goals over the course of the next five years:



The background of the entire graphic is a photograph of a church building with a white roof and people walking on a paved area in front of it. The image is partially obscured by several horizontal, rounded rectangular overlays in dark blue and light orange colors.

To start a **second morning service**
DONE!

To have 100 people attend the
Alpha course

To see 50 people become
followers of Jesus

To train **5 new leaders**
for gospel ministry

To start 10 new
Growth Groups

To see 125 people commit to
membership

To sponsor 50 **more children** through
Compassion & New Life Orphanage

To give away \$40,000 to **local school**
chaplaincy via The Park

To move towards starting a **second**
campus in a different location

Our Prayer



Our Father in heaven,

We long to see your name glorified and your kingdom come in our lives, in our church, and in our world. We know that you are able to do **more than all we could ask, think, or imagine.** We ask that your Spirit would renew and revive us and move us forward into all that you have for us.

Help us to **worship you wholeheartedly.** To trust in Jesus' finished work on the cross, to walk in step with your Spirit, to grow in knowledge of your word, and to deepen our devotion to prayer. Let all that we do be done for your glory.

Move us to **love and serve one another** in practical ways. Help us to welcome the outsider, to encourage the discouraged, and to receive the repentant. Move us to gather regularly, to love genuinely, to serve selflessly, and to give generously so that the body might be built up and needs might be met.

Give us **boldness to share and to promote the gospel.** Help us to do this both in our words and in our actions, whenever the opportunity arises. Grant us the humility to engage with gentleness and respect. Lift our eyes and move our hands to seek the good of our local community and to pursue and promote justice.

Gracious God, **fill us, move us, shape us** to become a city on a hill, a light in the darkness, a people that exist for your glory and for the good of others so that more people might find true and lasting life in Jesus.

We pray this in Jesus' precious name.

Amen.

The thief comes only
to steal and kill and
destroy; I have come that
they may have life, and
have it to the full.

John 10:10



Our Story

(the long version)



The following history of the Christian Reformed Church in Brisbane was compiled by Jack van Strien (1927-2021), a founding member of our church and a godly husband, father, Opa, and friend. We wish to express our appreciation to Jack and to his family for sharing this record with us.



It was on the 25th of November, 1951, almost 70 years ago, that the institution of the First Reformed Church of Brisbane took place in the YMCA building in the Brisbane CBD and regular church services began. This remained the only Reformed church in Brisbane until the 13th of March, 1965, when the Inala Reformed Church was instituted and services began.

However, as early as 1952, the elders of the Brisbane Reformed Church were already looking to extend the church and services were held for a short time in the Sandgate Presbyterian Church from 18th May to 15th October 1952, at which time the Presbyterian Church cancelled the arrangement.

The decision to start a new church so early in the life of the Reformed church seemed to be a bit premature. Church growth in the first years was very slow. This was a result of the Australian migration policy of the time that migrants could only settle in Queensland if they were sponsored by family or friends or paid their own fares over. This was in contrast to Sydney and Melbourne where the majority of the Dutch immigrants arrived and stayed in those states.

We remained at the YMCA as one congregation until the end of 1961 when we had the opportunity to purchase a Presbyterian church building on Sherwood Road Toowong via auction. This building was run down and dilapidated and an empty shell. We spent many months to make it habitable, even making our own pews and pulpit. After a lot of hard work, it was immensely gratifying to have our own building in which we could worship the Lord. On 3rd March, 1962, the building was officially opened and dedicated under the name of 'Reformed Church of Brisbane'.

The church in Inala was instituted in 1965 and Rev. W van der Kolk became their first minister. Now that two churches were instituted and two ministers were in place, we now turned our attention to the northside of Brisbane. With the approval of Session (Church Council) and the promise of help from Rev. van der Kolk, we explored the opportunity to plant a congregation on the northside of Brisbane. Towards the end of 1967 we managed to successfully hire the School of Arts building on Old Gympie Road, Bald Hills. The first



church service was scheduled for 17th January, 1968, and was to be attended by the Inala minister Rev. van der Kolk after his return from holidays at Noosa on the Sunshine Coast. However, before the weekend, we were informed that Rev. van der Kolk had been hit by a wave onto some rocks while surfing. He had sustained serious head and brain injuries and had died on his way to Nambour Hospital. This came as a severe blow to the Inala church and also the Toowong church. Rev. van der Kolk was one of the first men to study at the Reformed Theological College (RTC) in Geelong. It also meant that a northside congregation was off the agenda and would remain so until 1973.



In the beginning of that year, however, Rev. Keith Warren accepted an appointment as Vice Principal and later Principal of Queensland Bible Institute (now Brisbane School of Theology), and also Minister for Special Services of the Brisbane Reformed Churches. Now, with one Minister at Toowong, one at Inala and a Minister for Special Services, we were ready to try again for a congregation on the northside.



The Geebung Methodist Church was willing to let us use their church building for our service in the morning, before the start of their own service at 10.30am.

By the middle of 1973 we were made aware that on the corner of Trouts Road and Bourke Street, Everton Park, a partly finished building, belonging to the Methodist Church, was going to be sold. Negotiation between the Methodist and Reformed churches took place and by the end of 1973 we had secured a place for a newly established northside congregation. This site was dedicated and named 'Everton Park Reformed Church'. The building itself had an auditorium with space for approximately 80 people, a downstairs kitchen, a store room, and a separate toilet block. It had taken us 21 years from the first service at Sandgate to get to this point and hopefully this move would lead to an independent church on the northside of Brisbane in the future.

The time spent at Everton Park proved to be spiritually rich and wonderfully blessed by God. Within a short period of time we were holding our own Catechism classes, Youth Club, Cadets and Calvinettes (boys and girls groups), Sunday School and Vacation Bible School, which was a great success. Over the years we experienced a slow but steady rise in numbers, particularly in the later years of our stay at Everton Park. We felt something had to be done about this growth, so the decision was made to extend the building to create a larger auditorium. It turned out that because of council by-laws, car parking had to be provided as well. Due to the prohibitive cost of doing this, it was not a viable proposition. Plans were then cancelled and the only option we had was to remain at Everton Park and hopefully find a larger premises or building soon.

Sure enough, the Lord once again provided for us. After a relatively short period of time, we became aware of a former Methodist church building, which had since become a Uniting church, which was for sale in Collier Street, Stafford. The building had a seating capacity of 150 persons plus an extra 40 folding seats along the side walls (favourable with our young folk). It came complete with everything we needed; pews, seats, table, chairs, organ, carpet runners, kitchen, vestry, and choir room. Many of the items had been donated by the Methodist church members over time. We contacted the Uniting Church Property Board and following negotiations, we purchased the building for \$72,000, which was a wonderful result given it was valued at \$85,000. We were helped



in this regard given it was the preference of the Uniting church to sell it to a church congregation or a Christian organisation. Sadly, the property was later sold to a developer who demolished the building.

Settlement took place on 3rd October, and on 11th October, 1980, we became 'Stafford Reformed Church', which was later changed when we became instituted as 'North Brisbane Reformed Church'. Rev. Bill Wiersma was called from Christchurch in New Zealand and became the first minister of the North Brisbane Reformed Church, until his return to New Zealand on 12th July, 1987. Rev. Bob Murray then became Minister from 24th January, 1988, until 1st December, 1997.

For many years within our church there was an association known as 'North Brisbane Christian Schools Association' (NBSCA), which had been dreaming about and working towards starting a Christian school. In 1989 the NBSCA put forward a proposal to develop a 12-acre property at Youngs Crossing Road, Bray Park that they had purchased. This property included a 3-bedroom house with a number of horse stables. The objective of the NBSCA was to combine their resources with the church and to construct a building which would have a multipurpose function to be used jointly between the school and the church. The church would sell the manse it owned and relocate the Minister to the house on the property and also put the church building at Stafford on the market for sale. The school would then sell back to the church one acre plus the house and build a multi-purpose learning building to be used by the church and the school for 2 or more years until proper school buildings could be erected and the school would then vacate the church building.

This proposal was presented to the Session of Stafford on 20th December, 1989, after it was discussed at a General Meeting of the NBSCA where a joint committee was formed between the NBSCA and North Brisbane Reformed Church. Session called an AGM to discuss the proposal from the NBSCA with its members on 1st April, 1990, and the proposal was accepted in principle.





Another meeting was held on 11th April, 1990, and all those present and eligible were invited to vote formally. The proposal was discussed in length, with many questions and comments verbalised by members, including, 'Isn't there another way to start a school?' 'We have only been at Stafford for 10 years.' 'What about members who do not wish to travel to Bray Park' (some members did eventually leave the church for this reason). 'What is the financial consequence of this venture?', plus many more. Everybody who was present that evening felt the weight of the task and the responsibility that lay ahead. Moving the church to a new location and at the same time starting a Christian school was not a task to be taken lightly. Before we proceeded to vote on the proposal, we paused to pray and to ask God for guidance in our voting. The vote was taken and the result was unanimous to go ahead with the proposal.

The Joint Committee that had been formed earlier then called for an open committee meeting and presented the already prepared plans and layouts for the proposed building in conjunction with the architect Chadwick Palmer. A long discussion on a name for the new school was also a part of the meeting, with suggestions invited from all for consideration by the Joint Committee.

The Everton Park Manse and Stafford church building were then put on the market. Between April 1990 and September 1990, both properties were sold and the church property was scheduled for demolition. The last service at Collier Street Stafford was 30th September, 1990.

Temporary church accommodation was secured at the Uniting Church on Marshall Street, Strathpine until July 1991. The Joint Committee remained busy behind the scenes to prepare for the construction of the church building at Bray Park. Many hours of meetings, preparations, and discussions took place. By the end of 1990, construction on the building began and the call went out for help from volunteers and tradesmen among the church community. Every Sunday morning after the service at Strathpine, an update was given to the congregation of the work completed during the previous week and what was required for the next week.

Volunteers were abundant for every week and for every task that was needed. We truly experienced the provision of God through the hearts and hands of his people.

Finally, after much prayer and hard work, Genesis Christian College commenced at the beginning of 1991, with an enrolment number of 32 children from Grades 1-7, and the first service of Bray Park Reformed Church was held in the newly constructed building on Sunday 16th July, 1991.

Rev. Bob Murray served as our first Minister until the end of 1997. He was joined by Rev. John Hoogenhout at the end of 1996, who led our church until early 2018. John provided godly and stable leadership for 20 years and oversaw a period of growth and change in the life of our church, including a name change to Bray Park Community Church in the early 2000's. John was succeeded by Rev. Adam Schoenmaker in 2018, who continues to serve as Lead Pastor to this day.

Throughout the last 30 years there have been many changes, alterations, and additions to our campus and our building, including the removal of interior walls to make more space, an extension to the church hall, the conversion of the Manse into the church office, a new commercial kitchen, the construction and subsequent renovation of the Youth Shed, the construction of undercover areas as well as the staff car park, and the addition of The Park, our onsite café.

We have also developed strong and lasting partnerships with external groups and organisations to support God's work in other parts of the world, especially the New Life Orphanage in Myanmar. We continue to support New Life financially and in recent years a few of our members have organised trips and led teams of high school students from Genesis Christian College to visit the Orphanage. We have also sent a few teams to the Solomon Islands to construct different buildings and support the denominational mission base over there, as well as many years of involvement with Operation Christmas Child. At the beginning of 2016 we also entered into a church partnership with Compassion to help release children from poverty in northern Thailand, which included a trip to visit partner churches and project areas in 2019.





We've also sought to be a faithful and generous presence in our local community through many years of Care Ministry and partnership with Encircle, our local neighbourhood centre. This has included running a Community Cupboard, which has provided food, fuel, groceries and other necessities to many people in need in our community. We have also facilitated and run fortnightly 'Chappy Breakfasts' in Bray Park State High School and provided ongoing financial support to Scripture Union and local high school chaplaincy, most recently through profits from The Park. Other initiatives and organisations run by our members include Love in the Name of Christ (LiNC), which provides transport to important appointments for those unable to transport themselves, and Youth and Families Association of Pine Rivers (YAFA), which offers counselling services to those people who are struggling with problems within the family.

There have been various events, ministries, and programs attempted over the years to help strengthen our community and to reach more people. This includes a number of Christmas Carols events in various forms, including smaller candlelight events on the church campus and other large, community-oriented events in our local community. Café Church provided a space for a more relaxed introduction to church life with acoustic worship, recorded sermons, and round tables with food and coffee. Various other ministries have also offered the opportunity for a wide variety of people to connect with the church, including Games Ministry, 4WD Ministry, Craft Groups, Playgroup, and more.

Another feature of church life in the last 30 years has been the variety of camps, retreats and getaways. In the earlier years there were regular Church Camps, alongside many Cadets and GEMS camps, annual Youth Camps, and more recently Young Adult Retreats. These have all provided a space to connect with God and each other outside our regular environment.

Children's and Youth Ministry has been a feature and an important part of our church community throughout the last 30 years. There have been many godly and committed people who have served in these ministries and we have seen many young people be encouraged and equipped in their journey of faith.

Throughout the past 30 years we have also maintained a healthy relationship with Genesis Christian College. Despite the fact there is now a formal separation between church and school, there continues to be a warm ongoing relationship and a shared commitment to the mission of Christ.

After the passing of Jack van Strien in early 2021, the following quote was found on the back of his notes that formed the basis for this account and that perfectly summarise where we've been and where we are going.

**“God has used us,
a pilgrim people
To establish churches,
enroute to evangelism
and discipleship,
We are not just
a church with a future
but the church of the future”**

All glory to God!

