



# GOWRIE COMMUNITY CHURCH

## 80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY



11:00am

SUNDAY 6<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2013

Including histories of the district generally and the church in particular



Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home

The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

GOSPEL READING Luke 17: 5-10

*Kerryn Kay*

OFFERING AND DEDICATION

*Meg Mangan*

PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

*Meg Mangan*

THERE'S A LIGHT UPON THE MOUNTAINS (Hymn 207)

There's a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the spring,  
when our eyes shall see the beauty and the glory of the King;  
weary was our heart with waiting, and the night-watch seemed so long,  
but His triumph-day is breaking, and we hail it with a song.

There's a hush of expectation, and a quiet in the air,  
and the breath of God is moving in the fervent breath of prayer;  
for the suffering, dying Jesus is the Christ upon the throne,  
and the travail of our spirit is the travail of His own.

He is breaking down the barriers, he is casting up the way,  
he is calling for his angels to build up the gates of day;  
but his angels here are human, not the shining hosts above;  
for the drum-beats of his army are the heart-beats of our love.

Hark! we hear a distant music, and it comes with fuller swell –  
the great triumph song of Jesus, of our King, Emmanuel;  
Sion, go you forth to meet Him, and, my soul, be swift to bring  
all your finest and your dearest for the triumph of our King!

MESSAGE

*Peter Battle*

LORD JESUS CHRIST (Hymn 451)

Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,  
you are one with us, Mary's Son;  
cleansing our souls from all their sin,  
pouring your love and goodness in,  
Jesus, our love for you we sing, living Lord.  
Jesus, our love for you we sing, living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, now and every day  
teach us how to pray, Son of God.  
You have commanded us to do  
this, in remembrance, Lord, of you  
Into our lives your power breaks through, living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to you,  
live my life for you, Son of God.  
All your commands I know are true,  
your many gifts will make me new,  
into my life your power breaks through, living Lord.

BENEDICTION

*Peter Battle*

A NEW COMMANDMENT

A new commandment  
I give unto you  
That you love one another  
As I have loved you,  
That you love one another  
As I have loved you.  
By this shall all men  
Know you are My disciples  
If you have love one to another.

ADDRESS BY ALAN LITTLEJOHNS

*Rev Jim Furze*

(Introduce Alan)

The dedication of "Aunty Joyce's" garden and a tree planting, acknowledging the contribution of the Littlejohns family

GRACE

*Meg Mangan*

LUNCH will be prepared by volunteers from the Gowrie Rural Fire Service.

The Gowrie Community Church welcomes you today, Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> day of October 2013 to celebrate the friendship and dedication of all ministers, pastors and lay-preachers, congregation members, friends and neighbours, past and present, who keep this church alive.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 1983 we came together to celebrate the first 50 years of this church and we would like to acknowledge the work of Mr Lyall Green, now residing at Moonbi House, in preparing a history of the Gowrie district and church, which was included in that day's *Order of Service* and is referred to in this continuing story of our church in the community.

### *History of the Gowrie District*

Gowrie, in the Kamilaroi tongue (Gauri) means "down of the eagle hawk" as well as being a Scottish word.

By 1847, John Eales of Duckenfield (near Raymond Terrace) was the lessee of Currabubula Station which included all the land north of the Peel Range not belonging to the Australian Agricultural Company (Goonoo Goonoo); the present Gowrie. Later this was designated part of "Woodlands". Most of the land was still leasehold.

### *Early Settlers*

From 1861 onwards, selectors were entitled to buy any leasehold land. In 1865, Anthony Whitten and his wife Charlotte, came to work at "Lowestoft", a 16 ha. block south of Gowrie and on the southern side of the Peel Range. In 1867, he was joined by his brother Henry Whitten and Henry's bride Eliza (nee Mason). Charlotte and Eliza were sisters.

During the 1870's Henry acquired land fronting Spring Creek, naming his homestead "Gowrie", so named after its Scottish counterpart in Perthshire.

Some of the other early settlers include Burke, Dunbar, Egan, Emblen, Frizzell, Moore, Studte, Sweeney and Walters. Families including Ausling, Newcombe and Reading followed.

In 1910 the New South Wales government resumed 4,000 ha. of "Woodlands" for closer settlement. The resumption brought two families to be involved in the Gowrie church: George Cooper McGaffin acquired a block straddling the Gowrie Road about 1.6km from the highway and William B Roworth bought a block nearer to Duri. William's two sons, Ernest Albert and Arthur John acquired Henry Studte's farm, "Maryvale".

### *The Union Church*

Before any place of worship existed, services were held in private homes when ministers were free to ride their horses out from Tamworth. Early settlers were predominantly Catholic or Wesleyan, but there were sufficient Church of England and Presbyterians to establish a Union Church.

The Union Church was built at Gowrie during 1893 on a .2 ha site which had been set aside sometime earlier, beside the Gowrie Catholic Church. Services alternating between mornings and afternoons were conducted, in turn, by Anglican, Wesleyan, Presbyterian and, occasionally, Baptist clergymen. Generally, everyone attended all services, regardless of their denomination.

*In 1924 [since been confirmed to have occurred on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1928], a freak windstorm travelling a very narrow path struck the area that contained the Union Church, Catholic Church, Gowrie Public School and the home of*

*Richard Reading and his family. The school and the Reading homestead were undamaged but both churches were totally destroyed. A lamp standing on the veranda of the Reading home was not even over-turned in the melee! (from Chronological History of Tamworth, p.462)*

Subsequent to the church being destroyed in 1924 [1928], services were held in Gordon Whitten's "Woodlea" hayshed. Some years later, land was given on Spring Creek, by George C McGaffin and the present building was erected by Alan Shelton at a cost of 375 pounds.

### *The Methodist Church*

The Methodist Church was opened on this day in 1933 by the senior Methodist lady in the district, Annie (Mrs William) Moore (nee Mason). William was the first non-teacher postmaster and after his death in 1905, Annie ran the post office until 1933. William and Annie had a small farm along Spring Creek, a little downstream from where the Methodist Church was built.

*Access to the then Methodist church was via road which branched off the New England Highway 29 kilometres south of Tamworth. The road crossed Spring Creek and continued on to the Werris Creek Road. When the church was built, the front door faced the road, now the back door does! The reason for the change... originally the road which passed in front of the church negotiated the creek by a very steep bank which was frequently under water when storms in the hills of the nearby Peel Range brought the creek down a "banker". The road was re-routed to pass the back of the church and a two span concrete bridge was built at a cost of \$20,029 by William H Marshall & Sons in 1967. (from Chronological History of Tamworth, p.1008,1462)*

*During the time of William and Annie Moore, Gowrie became a post office rather than simply a receiving office. After Annie retired local people continued to run the office until it became only a telephone office. It remained as such until the arrival of automatic rural telephone exchanges made it unnecessary. Just before her death, Annie was involved in the official opening of the Gowrie Methodist Church. (from Chronological History of Tamworth, p.385)*

*Henry Edward Whitten retired to Tamworth in 1956 after serving as church steward for the Gowrie Methodist Church for 56 years. This included his time as assistant steward with his father. (from Chronological History of Tamworth, p.855)*

*Henry's brother, Percival Whitten, married Beatrice Walters who was the organist for years at the Gowrie Methodist Church. (from Chronological History of Tamworth, p.855)*

*Ernest Albert Roworth and Arthur John Roworth acquired Henry Studte's "Maryvale" farm. During the 1940's-1960's, when Methodist Church services were held on Sundays at Gowrie (at 11am) and at Duri (at 3pm), the minister or lay preacher would have a meal with the Roworth family after the morning service, before proceeding onto Duri. Such was the hospitality of Mrs E Roworth (Nita) and Mrs A Roworth (Mavis) that a "very light breakfast" was all that was ever needed beforehand. (from Chronological History of Tamworth, p.708)*

### *The Uniting Church*

The Uniting Church in Australia was formed on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1977, as a union of three churches: the Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

*"Unlike many small rural churches, the Gowrie Church still operates. It is now part of the Uniting Church, attracting worshippers from Duri and Garoo, as well as from Gowrie. In recent years, its chief steward has been the landowners grandson, John C McGaffin, while his wife, Adele, is the church's organist. The building is particularly well cared for. Following the morning service the preacher is always treated to comprehensive morning tea". (Lyll Green's comments published in 2004)*

In 1999 the Tamworth Parish closed and the Tamworth and District Congregations commenced.

On 14 March 2002 the Gowrie Community Church joined with Hallsville and West Tamworth Uniting Churches to become the Peel Valley Congregations.

### *New Settlers & Subsequent Generations*

In the mid 1900's another family name was added to the community; that of Harold Crowell, who married Mavis, the grand-daughter of Henry Edward Whitten.

More families made their way to Gowrie including Littlejohns by 1960's, Perkins in the 1970's, Watts and Morris in the 1980's, Hicks in the 1990's and Orr in 2009.

At the time of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church in 1983, five descendants of the early church families were still farming on Gowrie: Leonard Rex and Raymond William (great grandsons of Henry Whitten), Allen John and Mervyn Albert (grandsons of William B Roworth) and John Cooper McGaffin (grandson of George Cooper McGaffin).

When the Chronological History of Tamworth was published in 2004, both Ernest and Arthur had passed on and Ernest's son Mervyn had retired. Arthur's son Allen and his wife Helen were still at "Maryvale" and were both involved in the Gowrie Uniting Church. Allen and Helen have now retired to Tamworth.

Also at the time of publication in 2004, George C McGaffin's grandson, John McGaffin, had two grazing properties, "Hillcrest" to the north of his grandfather's original property (now owned by the Spry family) and "Fairview" to the south. Both John and Adele McGaffin were prominent members of the Gowrie Uniting Church. John has since passed on and Adele lives in Tamworth.

All these families have strongly supported the church over the years.

### *The Last 50 Years*

#### *Gowrie Ladies Church Aid & Fellowship*

On 28<sup>th</sup> April 1964 the Gowrie Ladies Church Aid (LCA) was formed, wife of Rev. Chaseling, was elected President. The ladies were active in raising funds for the Sunday school and such was the success of their efforts they were supporting the church trust. They put on concerts, held beetle nights, cake stalls, hat parades and the like. Enough money was raised to pay for the new lighting, carpet and covering of the pews.

By the early 1970's Mrs W Littlejohns had become President of the Gowrie Ladies Church Aid.

In 1976 Rev. Rawson-Smith suggested a Teenage Fellowship Group and an Adult Bible Study. Both of these groups' first meetings were held at the home of the Littlejohns. The meetings were well attended but it is not recorded how long they continued. About this time there was discussion about having services more regularly.

When union occurred in 1977 the LCA changed its name to the Uniting Church Women's Fellowship, Gowrie. The Fellowship was so successful that sub-committees needed to be formed to work on special events! In 1979 extra events, such as the bridal display and manure drives, were undertaken to fund the extensions for the Sunday school.

From this group, Helen Roworth, John McGaffin, Sandra Perkins and Lillian Littlejohns formed the organising committee for the 50th Anniversary.

By 1995 the group had been renamed Uniting Church Adult Fellowship, Gowrie and it is believed was finally disbanded in 2004.

### *Sunday School*

While little is known of the early periods of operation of the Sunday school, it is recorded that Superintendents included Mrs C Osling (date unknown) and Miss M Whitten (1920's).

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 1964 the Sunday school recommenced, opened by Rev A Winter with Carmen Whitten being the teacher. In 1966 there was talk of building an adjoining room to house the Sunday school, but about this time the Sunday school disbanded.

In 1974, the school once again opened, with Sandra Perkins as Superintendent, with 23 children and with the full support of the Ladies Church Aid, which helped with fundraising for the school. In April 1979 the Sunday school did get their additional classroom.

Over the years the Sunday school had many teachers, including Adele McGaffin, Tricia Cross, Helen Roworth and Lillian Littlejohns.

Children from as far away as Loomberah, Wallabadah and Garoo, came to Gowrie for Sunday school. There were so many children, sometimes over 50, that several groups were formed and instructed by different teachers. Adele would take her group, of boys, down to the creek for their class. On rainy days the boys would set up a little cricket game on the altar.

Sunday school picnics were held annually with Tamworth and Kootingal. Adele would take her piano accordion along and the children loved to listen to her play.

*Gowrie church has a past and present of which it can be proud. What of the future? It has what many churches lack – a flourishing Sunday school and, for Gowrie, we pray, “God grant ‘that thy youth is renewed like the eagles’”. (from Lyall Green’s History of Gowrie prepared for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary)*

The Sunday school sadly closed in 1985 due to dwindling numbers as the children went off to boarding school.

### *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

Planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary began with the forming of the organising committee (Sandra, John, Lillian and Helen) in March 1983. The anniversary was celebrated on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1983, Reverend Harry Graves was invited to be the guest preacher, and supported by the Parish Ministers, Rev Eric Drury, Rev Bruce Westbrook and Rev John Pearson. The organist for the service was Adele McGaffin and the Sunday school performed.

The congregation numbered 140 adults and 38 children.

*“Following the service, memorial trees were planted in memory of the McGaffin and Whitten families. Luncheon was then served”. (from Order of Service prepared for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary)*



## *Recent times*

In recent years many of Gowrie's families and children from Timbumburi school, joined together to put on pageants under the guidance of Janet Hicks and Pat Worrada. As well, Christmas Tree celebrations with Santa and Carols in the Country were well attended events. On many occasions the Tamworth Choral Society and Southside Uniting Church choir performed at Gowrie.

John Nowland was appointed New England North West Presbytery Peel Valley Lay Pastoral Assistant in 2004.

*The Gowrie Church has seen good times when 40 odd children had their Sunday school lessons in what has now become the kitchen, but the years passed and the children grew up, and the farms still stay in the hands of their parents, and so the children numbers faded; and now that older generation has had to leave and make new homes in Tamworth. The few church folk that were left were wondering how the church would fare, and then John came along and he tried so hard to stir us up, and then he called a particular meeting in which Mrs. Janet Watts attended. The new era began.*

*John contacted the architect and plans were drawn up on the basis of Janet Watts' idea to open the side of the church big enough to be wheelchair friendly, to update the kitchen, and put a water tank in and so it all began.*

*Kevin Hicks was the builder and he and Alan Littlejohns built a storage shed and a new toilet shed. John Nowland came out when he could and helped with the building. Alan was responsible for getting the tank base ready for delivery, and then we waited and prayed for rain.*

*If any of us asked to have some idea implemented, the builder did his best to do so. (from prepared history by Joyce Whitten in her recollections of Gowrie)*

In the spring of 2004 Joyce Whitten's plans for the garden started. She designed an arch which would be covered in creepers to use as the backdrop for wedding photographs, a substantial garden surrounding the old wild apple tree and had a pine tree planted to be decorated at Christmas.

The new tank was delivered in February 2005 and the shed and toilet block were built in early April of that year. The alterations to the church were completed and a dedication service held in the autumn of 2005.

John Nowland retired in 2010. For a short time after, Presbytery provided a resource minister, Rev Simon Hansford. Simon moved to Southside in 2011 and since that time, lay preachers have taken services at Gowrie.

Meg Mangan was appointed Pastoral Care Coordinator in November 2012 and regularly takes services at Gowrie. Meg has been a regular preacher at Gowrie since 1985.

Today, only one of the congregation bears the name of an original family; Athol Whitten and his new bride, Lorebel Whitten (nee Cantral).

Other members of the regular congregation include Alan Littlejohns, Jane Morris, Janet and Kevin Hicks, Evelyn and Tony Orr. We continue to have baptisms and weddings and the Christmas services are always well attended by the community.

As in early times, new families breathe new life into the church and community. Currently plans are underway to install new toilet facilities, upgrade the kitchen appliances and install a hot water system.

Mothers' groups, toddlers play groups and Messy church are all either underway or in planning.

We have services every Sunday at 8:30am with the exception of third and fifth Sundays of the month. The congregation members are active in volunteering in the community as well as the church.

We welcome your enquiries and invite everyone to join us in worship.

Current Executive of Peel Valley Congregations' Council:

Chairperson	Margaret Crowell
Vice Chair	Ross Davidson
Secretary	Shirley Whitten
Treasurer	Tony Orr
Assistant Treasurer	Janet Hicks
Pastoral Care Coordinator	Meg Mangan
Immediate past Chairman	Alan Littlejohns

*(This historical account has been prepared by Tony & Evelyn Orr, with the greatest of care. If you have noticed any discrepancies, please let us know and we will ensure relevant changes are made).*

*Tamworth Wesleyan Circuit Ministers*

1868-71	Rev Joseph Hopkins
1871-72	Rev James E Carruthers
1872-75	Rev Maurice Gray
1875-78	Rev Henry Youngman
1878-81	Rev James Phillips
1881-84	Rev James W Dowson
1884-87	Rev William Wools Rutledge
	1886: Services held at Duri and a church built there. It was near where the Tamworth-Gowrie and Duri-Dungowan Roads cross, or two miles east of the present Duri village. It appears to have been built as a Wesleyan Church, but became a Union church.
1887-89	Rev James G Middleton
1889-92	Rev Gustavus R Glasson
1892-95	Rev Charles W Graham
	1893: First Wesleyan service at Gowrie, first in a private home, then in the Union Church built near the present school.
1895-98	Rev Henry Wiles
1898-1901	Rev Joseph Beale
1901-04	Rev John Hulme
1904-07	Rev Benjamin Dinning
	1905: Services at Gowrie were conducted first Sunday at 3pm; third Sunday at 11am.
1907-09	Rev William Pearson
1909-12	Rev James Couwell
	1910: Government resumption of 12,000 acres (29 farms) in the Gowrie-Woodlands area.
1912-15	Rev James B Penman
	1915: Gowrie services reduced to 11am Sunday, monthly.
	1912-13: Rev Percy Westbrook, Second Minister
1915-17	Rev W Mills Robson
1918-21	Rev T Manning Taylor
	1921: Services at Gowrie increased to 11am, fortnightly.
1921-25	Rev Samuel W Bonnor
1925-28	Rev Percy L Black
	1928: Gowrie Union Church destroyed in freak windstorm.
1928-30	Rev William H Cox
1930-33	Rev Leonard M K Mills
1933-36	Rev N Hedley Parr
	1933: Gowrie Methodist Church opened at a cost of 375 pounds (\$750) on land given by George C McGaffin.
1936-39	Rev Samuel McKibbin
1939-43	Rev Frederick H McGowan
1943-47	Rev Richard C Barlow
1947-51	Rev Alfred A T Robens
1951-56	Rev Martin L Layton
1956-59	Rev Arthur I Buxton
1960-63	Rev Henry J Wilton
1964-66	Rev Wilbur S Chaseling
	1964: Mrs Chaseling first President of Gowrie Ladies Church Aid

*Tamworth Wesleyan Circuit Ministers (Continued)*

1967-70 Rev Harry Graves  
Rev Graves came back to Gowrie to take the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service in 1983

*Ministers, Pastors & Lay preachers at Gowrie*

1964-66 Rev A Winter  
Was involved in Ladies Church Aid and restarted the Sunday school in 1964. Rev Winter returned in 2013 to take services at Gowrie

1971-75 Rev E L White

1976-78 Rev J G Rawson-Smith

1956-present Peter Battle

1976-79 Rev R Wrightson  
1977: Gowrie Methodist Church closed 4pm on 22nd June and the Uniting Church of Australia commenced

1977-2003 Lyall Green

1977-79 Stan Varidel

1977-present Gideons

1977-2000 Barry Gillett

1977-81 Rev J Alblas

1977-2002 Mrs Dianne Nash

1977-96 Ben Donaldson

1978-82 B Mowbray

1979-84 Rev John Pearson

1979-98 Miss Noreen Dobbie

1980-86 Rev Bruce Westbrook

1980-85 Stanber

1982-90 Rev Eric Drury  
1983: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Gowrie church

1983-present Eddie Whitham

1984-98 Ross Kellahan

1984-90 Len Hutton

1985-92 Rev Arthur Pearce

1985-94 Peter Briggs

1985-present Margot (Meg) Mangan

1986-91 Doug Drever

1987-89 Rev David Brown

1989-92 Bert Woodward

1990-96 Rev Sumata Elia

1990-2003 Geoff Webster

1990-97 Mr Lex Clow

1991-2002 Paul Turner

1991-present John Nowland

1992-98 Rev David Hamilton

1993-2003 Ted Warwick

*Ministers, Pastors & Lay preachers at Gowrie (continued)*

1993-99	Jim Marston
1995-98	Rev Karen Burchell
1997-2006	Lorraine Wood
1998-2007	Rev Jim Furze
	1999: Tamworth Parish closed, Tamworth and District Congregation commenced.
1998-present	David Bissett
	2002: Peel Valley Congregations commenced, amalgamating Gowrie, West Tamworth and Hallsville churches.
2005-present	John Nash
2007-present	Margaret Crowell
2010-present	Rev Simon Hansford
2010-present	Susan Holloway
2011-present	James Cantrell
2012-present	Patrick Johnston
2012-present	Trevor Forrester