



Report from
Presbytery of Carpentaria



Report

The Presbytery of Carpentaria is committed to mission and growing disciples in every context and every community within its bounds. We continue to seek God's plan for our new Presbytery and build relationships between ministry agents, lay persons and the communities in which we are present.

About our Presbytery

On 1 March 2020, the Presbytery of Carpentaria came into being. Members of the Presbyteries of Calvary and North Queensland joined in a time of worship, commitment and prayer. It was a great time of celebration and the beginning of a new journey together.

With membership from all of the indigenous communities of the Calvary congregations, except the congregation of Zillmere who chose to transfer to Moreton Rivers Presbytery with which it had been developing a relationship over some time, and those from North Queensland, the presbytery of Carpentaria has begun a bold new adventure, with God leading us forward together.

Our Presbytery now extends from Thursday Island in the north, west to the Northern Territory border, south to Bowen on the coast, and further south to the western communities such as Boulia serviced by the McKay Patrol based in Cloncurry.

Focus since the last Synod

Throughout the last 18 months there has been a particular focus on the following areas:

Education and lay training have been a major focus as the ministry of our congregations grows. This includes opportunity for formal training in ministry and leadership as well as safe ministry with children, code of ethics and compliance.

Building a firm foundation of relationship and support as discussion began with the leaders of Calvary and North Queensland Presbytery around how we might work more closely together. After months of conversations and sitting together, a decision to move towards a new Presbytery was made.

Commitment to supporting congregations through Covid19 has been a significant focus over the last six months with many being able to offer online worship services. Due to ongoing technical issues, the Presbytery moved to a new meeting platform which has proven to be more easily accessible most of the time!

Technology continues to plague the regional, rural and remote parts of our Presbytery with most communities struggling to hold meetings and worship on a regular basis. Almost all our Indigenous communities on the Cape have found this impossible and have often had no service when they have needed it the most. Some have been able to gather outside in small groups under trees, but all normal gatherings have been cancelled making community life challenging to say the least.

Highlights:

After many years without ministry in placement, there is now a pastor in Aurukun. Pastor Leonard Paul began in April and has been a welcomed member of community life. Later this year a new manse will be ready for occupancy which brings to fruition a plan years in the making.

The times we have been able to gather at Presbytery in February and retreat in August have strengthened our connection to each other. This has fostered commitment to continue to be connected during the long months when no connection is possible. It was great to be able to share with our Cape brothers and sisters who could travel to Cairns.

These last few months have reminded us that our strength is in God who provides. Doors have been opened into local community life that were not opened before and in some communities, it was the Uniting Church that was able to help those in need when many other organisations left.

Project Plenty

We have sought to connect with the Project Plenty as best as we were able but have found this year to be very difficult. Engagement was high before Covid19 but with the focus of people being on the local setting and taking care of the people, there has been little connection this year.

Challenges/risks as we progress

The challenges for the whole of the North remain constant. Distance is a key factor in how people can connect with others, receive care and support, and be appropriately resourced for the challenges of ministry in the local community.

The reliance on digital technology has become prevalent but most communities have not received any upgrades to their systems. This means that internet is unreliable and patchy and often means that people cannot connect with others or participate in meetings or information sessions.

This has made many feel more disconnected than ever before and has put enormous strain on those in ministry. It must be said that this is also not the way indigenous people meet. The practice of being about to sit with one another and decide together has been severely hampered and has put tremendous strain on the communities that were in lock down for many months.

Having said that, it needs to be said that those in ministry and their local leaders have made an incredible effort to work around these challenges to support, care for and share the gospel with the people.



Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

Name Rev Christy Allen
Position Presbytery Minister Coastal
Email presmincoastal@ucacarpentaria.com.au
Phone 0418 184 834