

HERVEY BAY GOSPEL CHAPEL – OUR STORY

Hervey Bay Gospel Chapel is one of the oldest, maybe the oldest, church in Hervey Bay.

Mr and Mrs Emil Jensen Snr developed a property at the corner of Scrub Hill Road and Lower Mountain Road. After they met other Christians in the area, it was decided to start a Brethren Assembly. Their first meeting, thought to have been in 1898 was held under the big fig tree on Jensen's property.



Emil Jensen built a Hall on his property and this was used until 1922. Many had to travel by horse and sulky or walk, in some cases up to 20 km, on dirt roads and bush tracks. By 1909 there were approximately 30 in regular attendance.

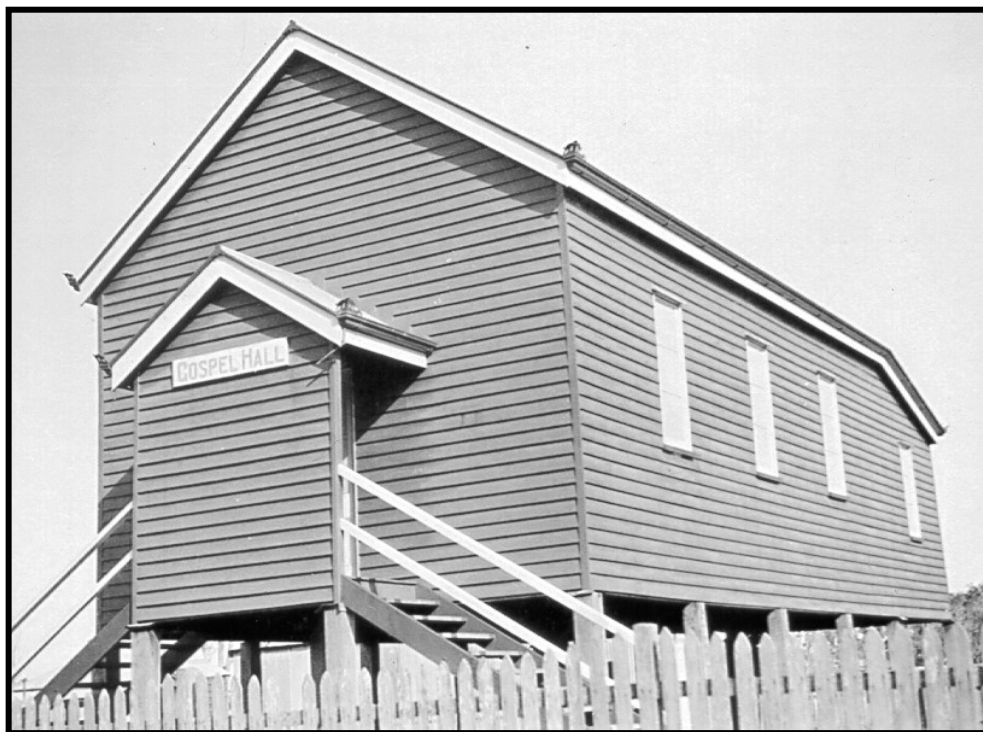


Their efforts to conduct services were supported by visits from gifted evangelists and bible teachers.



Bruce and May Todd were among the pioneering evangelists who used the affordable transport of the day for transport from place to place. In this case it is a horse drawn vehicle. Later, Gospel vans became fashionable. Still later, early motor cars were used to move to various destinations. Note the Gospel text which was often a feature of such vehicles.

In 1922 Assembly activities moved to the corner of Hunter Street and Torquay Road.



This Gospel Hall was built to replace a similar smaller Hall at Nikenbah. Mr Andrew Andersen donated the land and most of the timber. Mr Emil Jensen donated the flooring. Mr Martin Andersen at the age of 80 made the windows by hand and fitted them. The Hall was built on high stumps and was 11 m x 5.5 m.

In 1939 the Hall was extended another 2.7 m in length and 11 m wide allowing for a room on either side. In 1976 the Hall and the land were sold to Greg Jabs. The building was later moved to the site of the Pialba Post Office in Bryant Street and occupied by “The Observer” newspaper. Later again it was purchased privately and moved to Nikenbah.



Visiting evangelists and Bible teachers continued to visit. Among them were Bruce and May Todd, Captain Elsey, Mr and Mrs Phil Moss and Tom Braidner.



Bruce and May Todd



VISITORS - MR AND MRS PHIL MOSS



VISITORS - TOM BRAIDNER

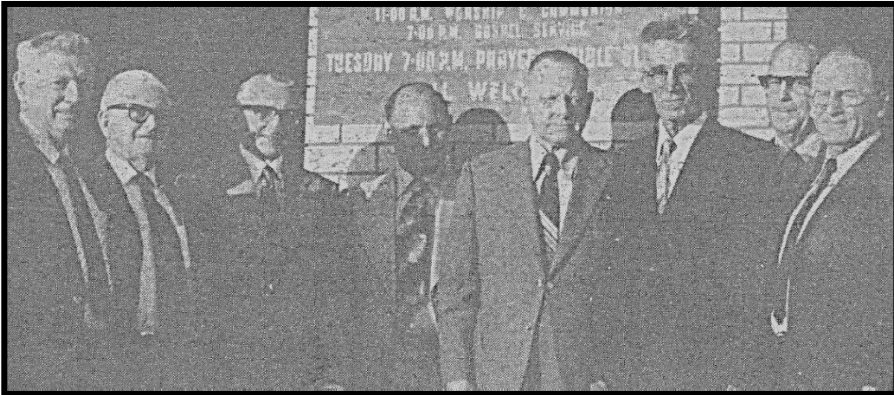
Tom Braidner - a visiting evangelist who came originally from Ireland in 924.

Later still bible teachers such as Cyril Lennox and Nev Backwell would bring Bible messages.

The Building at Torquay and Hunter Street was used until 1975 when it was sold.

Land was purchased at 44 Hunter Street and a new brick building was designed by Mr Ross McCormack and built under the

supervision of Mr Bevan Todd. While the new building was being constructed the Assembly met for a short time at the Christian Youth Camp. The new building was opened on 4 June 1977.



HERVEY BAY GOSPEL CHAPEL - OPENING DAY
Harold Ginn, Jack Forward, Alex Abraham, Ron Andersen,
Arthur Andersen, Colin Bengtson, Sid Dickman, Ray Ginn



In 1992 the above building was extended under the supervision of Ross McCormack, to provide a Dining Hall, Kitchen, Activities Hall and Barbecue Area.



Contributions to the Development of Hervey Bay

Mr Andrew Andersen was a man of vision and action. He established the first sawmill and supplied most of the timber for the Urangan Pier. He also built houses in Pialba. He and his sons Arthur and Bill opened the first garage, ice-works (there were no

refrigerators in those days), engineering works and laundry. They had their own electricity generating plant and supplied electricity to their own homes and the Gospel Hall prior to 1925.

In 1930 the Government in power asked him to consider the possibility of supplying power to the community. Because of certain stipulations he was not interested in the project. A new Government proposed conditions which were acceptable and the family installed an operating plant in Main Street which was connected to most houses in Hervey Bay. Mr David Todd was the electrician, and had the responsibility of installing the power to the homes. In 1948 the Wide Bay-Burnett Electricity Board was formed and a power house built at Howard.



Andersen family members continued an engineering business for many years and were renowned for their excellent standard of work. Some Assembly members were employed at the works. Ron, John, Bruce and Mark Andersen were, until recently, still involved in engineering and are residents of Hervey Bay.

Mr Hartford Messer, from the Maryborough Assembly, provided dental treatment for the residents of the area on a Tuesday in the

small house owned by Mr Andersen next to the Gospel Hall in Hunter Street where Centre 15 is now located. Mrs Elsie Andersen was his receptionist.

Mr and Mrs Horne built and operated a Boarding House on the Esplanade at Torquay.

Harold and Audrey Elvery operated a Drapery Shop in Main Street.



ASSEMBLY FAMILIES - ELVERY

Back Row - Harold (father), Audrey (mother), Garth

Front Row - John, June, Noela

For many years the Elvery family owned and operated Elvery's Drapery in the middle of the Pialba shopping area in Main Street. Garth later married Shirley and they became involved in work with the Bible Society. Noela has done extensive work with Gospel Recordings and is still engaged in lecturing about the value recording work. She is involved in work with the Brethren Assembly movement within Australia and in various other countries throughout the world.

Mr Jack Curtis and his sons Cecil and Stanley operated the sawmill in Charles Street, Pialba.



Mr and Mrs Frank Speare operated the Blue Pennant Bread and Cake Shop in Main Street with the Bakery situated across the laneway at the back of the shop.

Colin Bengtson's parents were possibly the first private settlers on Fraser Island and shared the island with the staff at the Quarantine Station at McKenzies. They owned the only freehold block of land inland from Moon Point on which they grazed 700 head of cattle and

later horses. The family also took up property at River Heads. Colin's father died when he was seven. His mother drove the horse and buggy with her young family to the Assembly at Nikenbah each Sunday. God has acknowledged the faithfulness and prayer of Mrs Bengtson as we see portrayed in the lives of her descendants.

While some of the land has been developed for housing, the Bengtson family still own significant areas of land at River Heads in 2021.

Other early pioneer farming families were the Jacobsens at Dundowran and the Jensens at Nikenbah.

Mr Robert Jensen was a carpenter and with Mr Charteris did a lot of building around the Bay. They were involved in the erection of the main building at Campialba in Hunter Street.

The Ginn family from Childers operated a sawmill, large cattle station, and engineering works. In 1967 they moved to Hervey Bay and opened an engineering workshop at Urangan. Their business included general engineering, construction of the Lilley Rake, boat building and prefabricated concrete houses. A number of Assembly



members were employed at these works. Besides members of the Ginn family there were David Waldock, Jack Christensen and Garry Brown.

Graeme and Robyn Organ, former members, conduct a women's clothing business in Hervey Bay.

Trevor Whitby operates businesses in Howard.

Ken and Phyllis Richards operated an orchard for many years in the Howard district.

In 1972 Mrs Rene Abraham was appointed Matron of the Sir Leslie Wilson Home at Torquay. In those days underprivileged children from Western Queensland were brought to the home for six weeks at the seaside. They attended Torquay State School and received medical and dental treatment while here. Mr Alex Abraham was the bus driver and was involved in helping his wife care for the children. They encouraged young Christian ladies from the Assemblies to assist in caring for the children. Some of these were Ruth Whalley, Merle Singo, Deb and Tina Millar, Sue Waldock, Kaye Lawrie and Jean Curtis. Dulcie Christensen had also been employed at the Home in the mid to late 1960's.



In more recent years a number of Chapel members have taken on the responsibilities of JP's. Included among them are Doug Hull, Glenyce Hull, Ron Just, Ray Scott (now deceased) and Trevor Whitby.

Other Christians who attended the Chapel over the years have been farmers, fishermen and tradespersons. Some have been employed in the professions and have contributed to nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, teaching and lecturing at Hervey Bay. A number have also been employed as shop assistants at local businesses or employed in various Government Departments and commercial institutions.

Some who have retired have made their home in Hervey Bay and have also contributed to the development of Hervey Bay. They have brought their capital, purchased housing, and have become involved in the community.

All members of the Assembly try to follow Christ's command to be "salt" and "light" and the community benefits from the example they

set as good-living, law-abiding citizens doing good wherever they find opportunity. In an increasingly lawless society the good example they set cannot be underestimated and the Hervey Bay Community is the better as a result.

Visitors

Being a seaside resort the Chapel has been privileged to have had many Christians visit - some on a regular basis. Others have made the decision to take up permanent residence here. The fellowship of these visitors has always been appreciated by the regular members of the Chapel.

South Sea Islanders



GOSPEL HALL - ISLANDER ROAD

A group of South Sea Islanders outside their Gospel Hall. Mr Stalley and others are present with them.

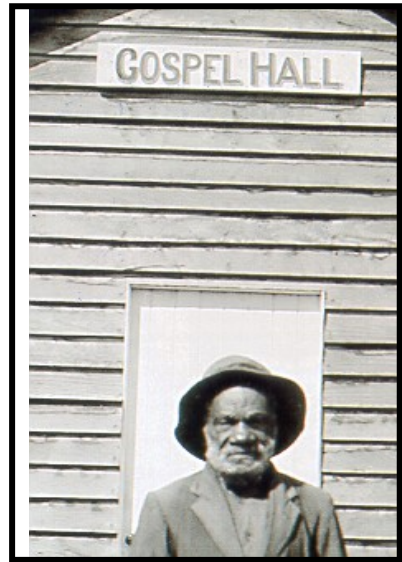
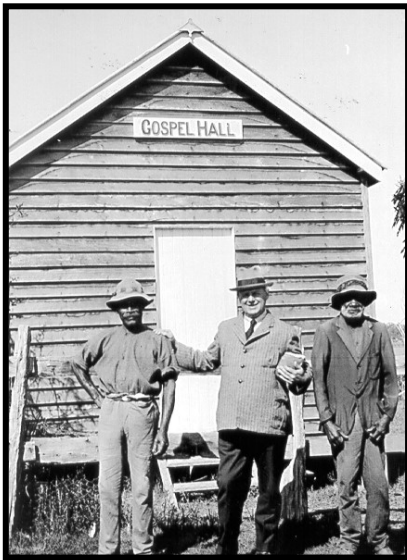
In the 1880's South Sea Islanders were brought to Queensland to work in the cane fields. Christians in Bundaberg associated with Fairymead Sugar Mill commenced teaching them Bible truths. As a result quite a number were converted to Christianity. Many of them worked in this area and members of the Assembly became involved with them and built a Gospel Hall for them in Fraser St which is now known as Islander Road. Mr Stalley had a real burden for them and gave considerable help in their services.

A number of the evangelists who travelled through the area also attended their meetings and ministered to their spiritual needs.



GOSPEL HALL - ISLANDER ROAD

A group of South Sea Islanders outside their Gospel Hall. Mr Stalley and visiting evangelist Mr Ted Fleishmann are with them.



This is a photograph of Tom Luckley outside the Gospel Hall built in Fraser Street (later renamed Islander Road) especially for the use of the South Sea Island community. People from Melanesia and the Solomon Islands had been brought (in many cases without their consent) to Queensland to work in the cane fields. Some came to Hervey Bay to work in the cane fields here. Mr Stalley came from Bundaberg to become involved in an evangelistic and pastoral care work among this group. When Islanders were no longer allowed to be imported from their homeland and some were returned to their place of origin, fewer Islanders remained in Hervey Bay. These eventually grew old or moved away to other places. As numbers decreased, the Gospel Hall came to be used less and less until it finally ceased to be used at all. After several years of non-use, the building was transferred to Campialba where it is still in use. Over the years some of the descendants of the early Island people have attended Sunday School at the Gospel Hall at the corner of Hunter Street and Torquay Road, Pialba. Among them were members of the Darby, Johnson, Byquar, Robe, Tanna, Gala and Williams families.



Pialba Sunday School taken in the grounds of the Pialba Gospel Hall on the corner of Hunter Street and Torquay Road Pialba. The pupils who have been identified are as follows 1. Kevin Robe, 2. Peter Jackson, 3. John Andersen, 4. one of the Jensen boys, 5. Peggy Jensen, 6. June Elvery, 7. Lynette Robe, 8. Jenny Darby.

In 1914, Harry O'Near, a very capable evangelist, expressed his desire to go back to the Islands as a missionary. The Church commended him to this work and he spent the rest of his life there.



HARRY ANNEAR

Harry Annear was brought with others of his people to work in Queensland. He came to Hervey Bay and became a very gifted evangelist. Through his preaching many, both black and white, came to accept Christianity. He felt he should return to his own people and his own islands as a missionary and so the local Christian Brethren Assembly commended him to do that work and with their encouragement and support he returned to the Solomon Islands.

Perhaps the most outstanding lady amongst the Islanders was Mrs Charles. She lived in Bundaberg and in her late teens married Charlie Wanganui. He went back to the Islands as a missionary to his own people, but was killed there. Mrs Charles came to Pialba and assisted quite a number of Islanders in obtaining pensions, saw that they were properly housed and cared for themselves. She passed away and was buried from the Gospel Hall.

Church Activities

The Assembly has always maintained an interest in bringing the Gospel message to young people.

Sunday Schools were held for most of the history of the Chapel. Attendance at Sunday School has always been open to any parent willing to send their child and to any child willing to attend. For many years various Assembly members have made their private vehicles available for transporting children to the Assembly Sunday School. As previously noted, many of the children attending were from South Sea Island families and there have always been strong links between the Gospel Hall and the Islander Community.

Sunday School was conducted in the Urangan Progress Hall for many years to meet the needs of children from Urangan. Those involved in this work included Ron and Betty Andersen, Ray and Flo Ginn, Ross and Meryl McCormack and Ray and Bev Clow.

Many local children can testify to the spiritual benefits of attending the Sunday Schools conducted by Christians meeting at the Gospel Hall.

Jack Christensen attended when he was twelve years old. The Krueger family, who were contacted by Colin Bengtson and attended Sunday School while living at Hervey Bay and as a result were converted, have had a major influence on a number of Queensland Assemblies and churches.

When large Sunday Schools operated, Sunday School picnics were a very special day. With the emphasis on Sunday Sport and with the mobility of our society, Sunday Schools became much smaller, or ceased to exist.



ACTIVITIES - SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC

Sunday School Picnics were held for many years at the Pialba Sports Oval (now called Pialba Seafront Oval). In this photograph everyone is seated in the old shelter shed listening to a Bible story. Team games such as cricket and rounders were played during the day. Novelty events such as egg-and-spoon race, three-legged race and sack races were a must on the program at any Picnic.

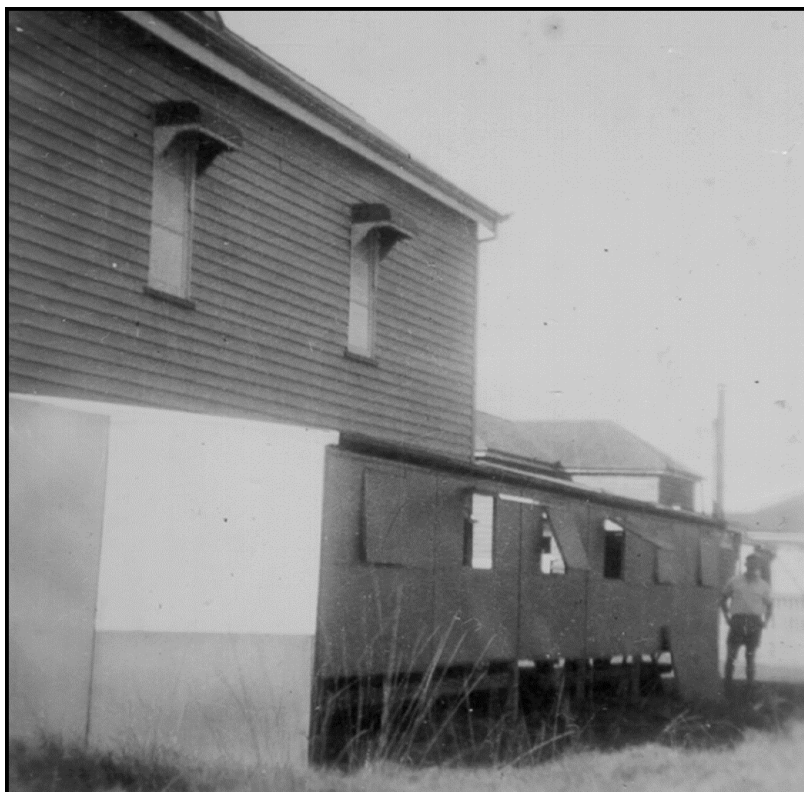
Teenage Activities

A number of programs for teenage young people have operated in the past. The most popular of these has been the "Time Out" program. This was well attended while in operation.

Camping

Hervey Bay Gospel Chapel has from early days been associated with Christian Camping for young people.

Back in 1949 and the 50's early camps were conducted at the Gospel Hall on the corner of Torquay Road and Hunter Street. The boys were housed beneath the Hall and the girls in nearby housing



In 1954 a Committee was formed and land purchased from Mrs Scott at 34 Hunter Street to establish permanent facilities and the Christian Youth Camp (now Campialba) came into being. All camps were transferred to these new facilities.

Hervey Bay Gospel Chapel members as a whole, and individuals, have an intense interest in the work associated with Campialba. This interest is expressed in practical and financial ways and through prayer.

The Chapel is represented on the Campialba committee by Ross McCormack and the Chapel makes its facilities available as required. It goes without saying that there have always been close links between the two groups as Christian Camping and camps of other categories such as schools and other tourism groups, craft, sports, and family celebrations continue to flourish. (See the link to Campialba on this site.)

Girls

An Every Girls' Rally operated from 1981 - 1989. The Rally was conducted at Campialba. Leaders who assisted with the conduct of the Rally included Claire Connell, Elaine Waldock and Meryl McCormack.



ACTIVITIES - EVERY GIRLS' RALLY (EGR)

Every Girls' Rally was held at Campialba for a number of years. Leaders shown are 1. Elaine Waldock and 2. Meryl McCormack. The Rally Code is written on the poster in the background.

After the Girls' Rally ceased to operate a Girls' Brigade Troop commenced. Leaders of the group were Glenyce Hull, Rebecca May, Meryl McCormack and Dulcie Christensen. Rob Elliott acted as Chaplain to this group.



ACTIVITIES - GIRLS' BRIGADE

Leaders - 1. Glenyce Hull, 2. Dulcie Christensen, 3. Rebecca May.

Religious Instruction

The program conducted in Hervey Bay primary schools is a joint program under the supervision of the Hervey Bay Ministers' Association. Barbara Ginn was, at one time, the coordinator for this program. The Chapel has supported this program through the participation of Chapel members as teachers, some over a span of many years, and by financial and prayer support. Currently age and poor health prevent many of those who were once teachers from present participation in the program.

Women

Craft

A number of years ago women's craft classes were commenced. During these classes women are introduced to a wide variety of arts and craft. A large number of women from many different backgrounds attend. During winter, attendance includes visitors as well. This gives women from the Chapel the opportunity to not only share their craft skills but, more importantly, their faith and to be a living witness to God's love for mankind.

Craft classes have been popular with the young mothers as there was a Creche for their children.

Ladies' Friendly Hour

For many years the ladies of the fellowship conducted the Ladies' Friendly Hour on a monthly basis. Times of fun and creating were shared by those in attendance. The devotional messages and program were appreciated by many who attended.



Felecia Calderon, Win Gurnett, Ruth Walker, Edith Fairweather, Joan Todd, Elaine Waldo, June, Bev Clow, Thelma, Olga Christensen, Gail, Ruth Winwood - September 1993

Even garden parties were held. Sometimes these were held at the home of Mrs Ruth Walker



Community Activities

These have included service to local nursing homes – mending and wheelchair walks at Tricare and church services at Torbay and Masters Lodge. Some have faithfully contributed to these activities over many years.

Missionary Work.

The Chapel has always had a strong missionary emphasis with interest in missions and missionaries both within Australia and overseas.

Over a period of time the following are some who have been commissioned by the Chapel to serve elsewhere.

Foreign Lands

Allen and Rhonda Adams
Noela Elvery
Ross and Leah Ginn
Harry O'Near
Phil and Adele Thomas
Russell and Gwenneth Todd

Within Australia

Graeme and Roslyn Andersen
Garth and Shirley Elvery
Lance and Nelda Foley
Trevor and Faye Ginn
Ron and Glenda Krueger
Janelle Richards



The Assembly conducts special missionary prayer meetings to pray for missionaries and missionary activity. During visits to the area, missionaries on home leave share aspects of their work through audio/visual presentations and talks. The Assembly is actively involved in the Wide Bay Missionary Rally and is now wholly responsible for it under the leadership of Ross McCormack.

In support of missions the women in the Assembly have been active over many years in the Sisters' Missionary Group.



ACTIVITIES - SISTERS' MISSIONARY CLASS

Back Row - 1. Mrs Austin, 2. Thelma Austin, 3. Vera Todd, 4. Mrs McLean, 5. May Todd, 6. Elsie Andersen with John, 7. Lorna Jensen with June Elvery
Middle Row - 1. Mabel Andersen, 2. Mrs Scott, 3. Bessie Scott, 4. Mrs Horne, 5. Mrs Coomber
Front Row - 1. Winnie Jensen with Vince?, 2. Mrs Budden

While the focus has been on praying for and supporting in practical ways, women on foreign mission fields and women working as full-time missionaries within Australia, there has been opportunity, on occasion, to be involved in helping needy women and children overseas and within Australia. Clothing has been sent to Papua New Guinea, and clothing, food and other domestic items to help those suffering from the effects of recent disasters within Australia.

Special meetings have been held with women missionaries home on leave or who were about to go to a foreign mission field.

The sponsorship of children in Kenya is also undertaken.

CWCI (Christian Women Communicating International)

We at the Chapel have, and continue to have, close links with this organisation, including safari members, executive positions and membership at a local level.

KYB (Know Your bible)

CWCI produces Bible studies for women. These are known as KYB lessons. A KYB group has for many years been associated with the Chapel and is well supported. In addition, some Chapel women are members of other KYB groups in Hervey Bay.

Acknowledgement

As a church we acknowledge that all of the matters listed in this outline of our history have been by God's guidance and grace and undertaken for His glory. We look forward to a future with Him and wait with anticipation to what He is still to do.