



THE LAKES  
— CHURCH —

# 50 Years

our history





1901

According to historical records, there was a Church of Christ in Cairns in 1901.

“ A. Cooper and his wife went to Cairns as complete strangers and knew no Church of Christ or isolated brethren. They began to talk to others and invite them to their home for further enquiry and instruction. On 5th March 1901, two were baptised in a running stream, and one was immersed in a bath at the hospital”.

(100 years venturing in faith: Churches of Christ in Queensland)

By 1903 the church had 10 members and a Sunday school of 14. However, there are no further records available and by 1911 it seems that this church had ceased to exist.

1969

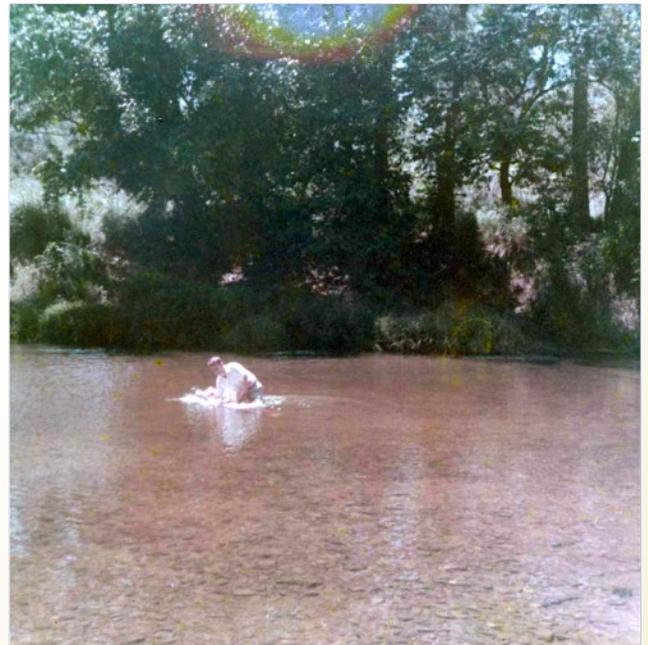
The Lakes Church as it now exists began in 1969 after a tent mission run by evangelist Doug Willis. These tent missions were a tried and true method of evangelism during the twentieth century in Australia. Doug came to Cairns and set up an inflatable tent called the 'Aerosphere' and talked to anyone who would listen about the love of Jesus and about a simple, uncluttered form of Christianity under the name 'Churches of Christ'.

Following this tent mission a few people began meeting together as a church on Sunday mornings in the Country Women's Association Hall on Yarrum Street in Earlville.



1974

In 1974 the small church became formally affiliated with Churches of Christ in Queensland and the following decade saw a number of recently retired pastors from other churches in Queensland come to serve in Cairns for a year or two at a time.





## 1980s

A major turning point came in the early 1980s when a lady in the church donated her home in Martyn Street for the use of the church. The property had enough space downstairs for the church to meet, and enough space upstairs for accommodation for the pastor.

However, over the next few years the church outgrew the house and ended up using the facilities of other churches or renting other halls including the Presbyterian Hall in McLeod Street.

In 1985 an opportunity came up to buy the Presbyterian hall. The church didn't have a pastor at the time, but volunteer elders Ray Wearmouth, Dean Harris and Rick Green led the church through a time of prayer, worship and discernment. The

decision was made to buy the property and after extensive renovations, the Cairns Church of Christ building was opened in 1986.





Under Gabriel Barbare's ministry, which began in 1986, the church grew significantly. This growth continued under Bruce Warwick who came in 1988 and became the first long-term pastor in the life of the church. The growth of the church meant that despite the extensions carried out by the church members, it was eventually decided that the premises on McLeod Street were too small and it was time to move on. In 1995, with a mixture of sadness and joy, the final service was held in the McLeod Street property.

*"A sermon to end all sermons in our 'tin shed' was delivered by our pastor, resulting in a good response to the call of Christ. Fifteen people committed or recommitted their lives to him."*

Wendy Thorne



# A New Church Home

While a new meeting place was sought, the church met at Cairns State High. During this period of transition the church welcomed their first Youth Pastor, Phil Bignill. Soon after, Bruce Pederson replaced Bruce Warwick as Senior Pastor. An article written at this time said:

*“We have certainly grown in numbers, and we believe we’ve grown to know Jesus better too. People in Cairns need the Lord and a fellowship that offers real love and concern for others.”*

Eunice Leet

Eventually a new church home was found on the corner of Greenslopes and Macnamara Street. Left derelict for the previous 9 years, this property comprised a large block of land with foundations and block walls three metres high, but little else. Following lengthy negotiations and the help of a \$100,000 interest free loan given by a family in the church ‘The Ruins’, as they were known, were purchased.

The building was completed in December 1996 and the church moved in and changed its name to Centenary Lakes Christian Community.

*“When a few pray, God hears and answers. The church today is what it is because of so many praying over the years.”*

Gay Andrejic



In the new location the church continued to grow. A popular ministry called 'Cornerstone Cafe' began, providing live music, a talk and a meal on Sunday evenings.

In 1998 the church realised that new opportunities were being held back by a lack of facilities. A letter to the congregation emphasised the need to develop ministries to kids, families and other groups. This resulted in the hall, which perfectly complemented the growing ministry, being built.

In 2003 Phil Bignill stepped into the role of Senior Pastor and over the following years a number of associate pastors, coordinators and administrators served the church alongside him.

Money was raised in 2011 for a large undercover area between the two buildings on the property, and again in 2016 for a custom-built playground next to the hall. Both of these developments have served the church and the wider Cairns community.

Geoff Snook joined the church as Generations Pastor in 2012 and then stepped into the role of Senior Pastor in 2015.

The church continues to grow and develop in every way. Every Sunday morning there are two services with kids ministry programs. Each week six playgroup sessions, a kids club and a youth group meet onsite. There are dozens of small groups, hundreds of people serving and each year 15% of all money given to the church is given back out to people and organisations we partner with in mission.



*"I believe if we are faithful, God is able to do wonderful things. From a small group of around 10 people, to a congregation of over 500 today, this is an assurance of his guidance and blessings."*

Carol Duncan

*“As we celebrate fifty years of The Lakes Church, I am in awe of God’s faithfulness. Whenever we reached the limits of buildings, finances or people, God proved again and again that he could be trusted. I am thankful for the faith and generosity of our people over the years. Many risks have been taken and sacrifices made for the sake of God’s work through his church.*

*My prayer for our 50th Anniversary is from Psalm 126: “And now, God, do it again!” May God again show his faithfulness. May we again have faith in him, being generous and sacrificial. And may we see people come to faith in Jesus and find a home in our church again, and again and again for many years to come.”*

**Geoff Snook (Current Senior Pastor)**

#### SENIOR PASTORS

1970 Doug Willis  
1974 Jim Cunningham  
1977 Lloyd Thom  
1979 Vic Parker  
1981 Vic Boettcher  
1982 Ed & Joy Chandler  
1983 Paul Seiler  
1986 Gabriel & Janelle Barbare  
1988 Bruce & Cheryl Warwick  
1996 Bruce & Lyn Pederson  
2003 Phil & Julie Bignill  
2015 Geoff & Laura Snook

#### ASSOCIATE PASTORS

1994 Phil Bignill - Youth Pastor  
2004 Walter Harnisch - Youth Pastor  
2011 Liam Bradford - Worship Pastor  
2011 David Wilson - Discipleship Pastor  
2012 Geoff Snook - Generations Pastor  
2014 Matt Miller - Executive Pastor



[www.thelakes.church](http://www.thelakes.church)