

THANKSGIVING SUNDAY

THANKFUL HEARTS

COLOSSIANS

Looking back on our church life through 2019, what makes you feel thankful?

List specific events and people; things you've learned; ways you've been stretched; ways others have served; growth in your understanding of Jesus; specific fun and fellowship you've had with others at church - anything at all.

MAKE SURE YOU LEAVE TIME TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR
THESE THINGS AT THE END OF YOUR MEETING!

Colossians 1:3-14

³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf ⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Colossians 3:15-17

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

In the way the gospel works, God's grace to us (his generosity in Christ) is meant to lead to our gratitude. Then by the Spirit, our gratitude is meant to motivate our loving actions and service.

On thanksgiving Sunday, we're going to pause and give thanks together for the great privilege it is to be called into God's family - especially the part of his family we call MPC!

Earlier this year we looked at Paul's letter to the Colossians. You may have noticed that thankfulness was a key theme.

1. **Read Colossians 1:3-6.** What two things make Paul thankful for the Colossians in verse 4, and where do they spring from?

2. We love being a church where people invite, grow, love and send. From Paul's words, what does gospel growth look like? ("In the same way" means that their experience has been duplicated all over the place. Is it happening at MPC?)

3. **Read further in 1:9-14.** Why should thankfulness (v12) be a result of the long list of changes described in verses 9-11?

How is this summarised in v12b-13?

4. **Read Colossians 2:6-7.** This is Paul's description of a contented Christian life. Where do you struggle most in these?

Maybe it's never quite occurred to you to give thanks for the privilege of being included in God's people, and brought into a "church" - It's great! We've been brought from darkness to light, from drought to fresh springs of water. Our sins have been forgiven!

5. **Read Colossians 3:15.** Think of someone you know who seems to have a thankful attitude. In your experience, how does this connect with the other issue mentioned in the verse?

6. **Read Colossians 3:16-17.** How is our thankfulness meant to affect our songs, our words and our deeds?

Is that the case with you? How can you change your thinking?

7. Why and how is Jesus the key to this thankfulness (v17)?

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2020, God willing, we're planning to make some big changes to our buildings and facilities, as we aim to expand our capacity as a church that bears a crop of gospel fruit into the future.

Making changes to our building is expensive and challenging. But it's not in any way our 'vision.' It's just a necessary step towards growing, loving, and living thankful lives together in Christ.

So as we take stock of the huge list of benefits and enjoyments that flow from being part of a loving, united, praising, singing and forgiven community gathered around the Lord Jesus, it's good to remember our vision is not to grow a building, but a people.

At the same time, it's important to count the cost in disruption, relational and financial ways. In past years, Vision Sunday has been the time we looked ahead and considered the cost of gospel challenges we were prepared to carry together as detailed in our projected budget. We're doing this on Sunday, but we'd love you to spend some time discussing it as a group.

2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In 2019, special donations of just over \$350,000 were given to the building appeal. At the same time, we appear to be running at around 91% of budgeted regular giving. We hope to achieve 95% of target by the end of year. *Please read the detailed budget report from Treasurer David Kelly.*

With a combination of grants and loans and our own giving, we hoped we could meet projected building payments with an increase of 10% on our 2019 budget. But because we haven't reached our 2019 goal, we'll need to project a larger percentage from actual giving.

Have you understood our financial situation this year? Are you aware of the financial updates on the back of the weekly bulletin?

As we will be projecting next year's target from a lower base (ie actual giving for 2019), to reach our target building repayments we will need to increase budget by 12% of this year's giving. Even then, we would be cash-flow negative for 2020 by between \$120,000 and \$150,000. In other words, our current reserves of \$240,000 will be depleted - we can't do that very often!

Alternatively, we can increase our PCQ loan by \$150,000 to \$1.35 million. Our first year cash flow deficit would be reduced to around \$12,000, which is easily accommodated within our current cash reserves. ***We would need to agree to this increase at our congregational meeting.***

Do you feel a 12% increase is an achievable goal?

How do you feel about eating into our cash reserves?

Would you agree to increasing our loan from \$1.2 to \$1.35 million?

Our project budget (including consultant fees) is just over \$3 million. We could start building in March, and be back on site around six months later. In the interim, we'll be meeting in the mornings at the Baptist College (as we did for our combined service in March) and at Arana Hills Community Centre in the evening. But we haven't yet said our final "yes" to proceed. Please pray for wisdom in this decision.

What would make you most enthused about voting 'yes' to proceed at this point? What are your biggest concerns?

Note that our congregational meeting will be asked to approve the potential future sale of one of the houses on Blackwood St as security to PCQ as a condition for our loans.

Please send your feedback to info@mpc.org.au after you meet

GIVING THANKS

Conclude your time together by giving thanks for God's generosity to us in the gospel. While we were dead in our sins, we heard the good news of Jesus, and "truly understood God's grace." (1:6) As a consequence, God has qualified us to share in the inheritance as we join his 'saints' in the Kingdom of light. (1v12) Better still, he has rescued us from darkness, and redeemed us by forgiving our sins. (1v13) He has called us to peace with one another, and his word dwells in our hearts! (3v15-16)

Pray about these things, and the other "thanks points" you listed at the start of this study.