

"You are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me" Psalm 31:3

The Presbyterian Banner



April 2026

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From the Editor



Quoting Paul Tillich, “Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is one element of faith.” I’m not so sure about this. Actually, I’m quite sure. This is wrong.

To be sure, even people with strong faith may sometimes struggle with doubts. But to say that doubt is by definition part of the essence of faith? No thank you.

The Heidelberg Catechism, after asking the question, “What is true faith,” gives as part of the answer: “True faith is not only a sure knowledge by which I hold as true all that God has revealed to us in his Word; it is also a wholehearted trust.” Note the words: sure knowledge, and wholehearted trust.

You have to know the truth about Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible. But not only that, you have to know that what you know is true. You have to be sure that it’s true.

Plus, faith also involves a measure of assurance. You can know the right things, you can even believe that those things are true, but if this is where you leave it, you are no better off than the demons who have a very sure knowledge of who Jesus Christ is.

If you never have any confidence whatsoever that Christ died for you and has saved you, can it really be said that you have faith?

Trusting assurance. This is what makes our knowledge of Jesus Christ more than just plain knowledge. This is what makes it a living faith.

Jim Klazinga

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The PCEA was founded in 1846 and adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) as a correct summary of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.

There are congregations in Kalinga in QLD; Maclean, Wauchope, Kindee, Taree, Cardiff, Raymond Terrace, Sydney CBD, and Mt Druitt in NSW; Narre Warren, Carrum Downs, and Geelong in VIC; Ulverstone in TAS.

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The editor is grateful for the assistance of an informal network of Banner liaisons from the various PCEA congregations.

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Brisbane

[Report by Jim Klazinga]

Hainian and Naomi Yu have moved back to Brisbane after a year in Rockhampton, along with their newborn daughter Elowyn. Elowyn is scheduled to be baptised during the morning worship service on 12 April.

We are thankful that Robyn Klazinga, formerly of the Southern Presbyterian congregation in Hobart, could be welcomed as a communicant member on Sunday, 29 March, the same Sunday we were celebrating the Lord’s Supper. Robyn recently married Caleb and is currently working as a medical doctor in a local hospital.

This year has seen a change in our mid-week Bible Studies. For a number of years we have been meeting on zoom every other week, making use of a variety of video courses offered by Ligonier Ministries. We have now begun meeting fortnightly at the church,

with distant members being able to join in by zoom if necessary. Pastor Jim has been giving talks loosely based on the teachings contained in “Biblical Theology, Old and New Testaments” by Geerhardus Vos. Time has also been set aside for Psalm singing, Bible readings, and prayer.

We are thankful that this year Irene Morrison could begin organizing a monthly sewing bee at the church.

We look forward to welcoming Dr Tas Walker of Creation Ministries International to present a talk entitled, “Creation: A Key to the Gospel” at 7:00pm on Friday 17th of April. A congregational meal will precede this presentation, beginning at 6.00 pm.

* * * * *

Hunter

[Report by Ian Miller]

The Hunter congregation continues in good spirits, waiting upon the Lord for the provision of a settled Minister.

All fellowship meetings and activities are well attended. This includes public worship, fellowship lunches and dinners, the mid-week Bible study/prayer and the Cardiff Sunday School.

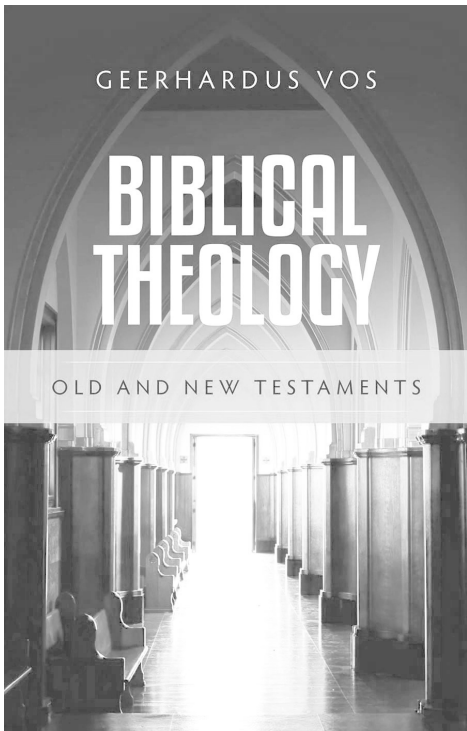
Mid-week Bible studies are based on 1 Peter. The adults Sunday School class has been studying the Westminster Confession of Faith. After the Easter holidays we resume at

chapter 13 'Of Sanctification'.

Rev Ball has been preaching two very helpful series: 1 Thessalonians, and the Psalms. During Easter Rev Don Burgess is planning to conduct the three Lord's days worship meetings and during fellowship lunch to provide an update on the Mitsmisyi Orphanage, Kenya. On Lord's day 26 April Rev Dr Nobin Shunmugam has committed to pulpit supply.

The first men's fellowship meeting this year (Saturday 2 May from 8 am at the Cardiff Church Hall) promises to be an instructive and enjoyable time. Dr Mark Harwood of Creation Ministries International is to speak on the topic: 'Discovering the Divine Designer. An engineer's journey of faith'.

The O'Dell family; Miriam, Mrs Amelia (nee King), Charlotte and Mr Nic O'Dell have welcomed a son and baby brother, David



Phillip (born 12 February) to the family. Both families and the congregation give thanks to our gracious God.

Please pray for Richard Alley and Ian Allen, senior members of the congregation, who are about to undergo necessary medical operations.

Our prayers to the Throne of Grace continue for many persons, missions and our sister congregations.

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Hawkesbury Nepean

[Report by Elizabeth Muldoon]

This month we celebrated the marriage of Tomassi and Kakala at our little church. A wedding is always wonderful! It was a joy to be there as the young couple made their vows to each other and to the Lord in front of the congregation. They promised to love and cherish each other "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health until death do us part or the Lord returns." The church was full, as friends and family had come from different parts of Sydney and Australia, from New Zealand, and from Tonga. We do pray for them, that God will bless

them and keep them and help them to remain true to their commitment to each other from this day forth.

On Sunday the church was full and overflowing again, as the Tongans have a tradition that on the first Sunday after the wedding, all the wedding guests go to the church where the young couple worships. This is to encourage them in their faith and to encourage them to put God first in their lives. Now we wish that we always had every pew full, and people listening to the message from the hall, as well, but we do thank the Lord for all the people who came on that Sunday.

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Manning

[Report by Pamela Leggott]

It is with sadness that we farewell our brother Paul Dyson, who passed away on the 21st of March after a long battle with cancer. Paul was a much loved member of the Manning PCEA, he professed faith in the Lord Jesus in 1991 and not long after was inducted as a deacon, serving the congregation for over 30 years. His commitment was very evident by the way he led his life, in the church and in the community. He was a volunteer with the RFS for over 46 years and rose to hold the position of Senior Deputy Captain at Tinonee, his peers in the RFS have said “ Paul was a well respected long time Tinonee resident known to many of the community as a great bloke, a hard working painter and a gentleman with faith and principles”. Paul will be sadly missed by his church





learning of the impact of the gospel on the Samburu people and how the Lord is working in a powerful way converting many into the Kingdom by His Word. We were able to sponsor some Samburu children and prayerfully bring before the Lord the needs and challenges of Samburu Mission. The ministry has grown at an incredible rate, there are many

as Dalby in Queensland and Blaxland in the Blue Mountains. Please pray for the work of this mission. If you would like to know more just go to the website missionsamburu.org.

* * * * *

Melbourne

[Report by David Lachman]

The last few months have been quiet and steady in the congregations. David started a series through Titus, beginning by taking a number of weeks focussing on the way Christ works in men who he calls to serve as elders. We’ve had a number of visitors, both in Carrum Downs and Narre Warren. We pray for the Lord to bring those who he would knit into the congregation and for wisdom and grace to reach out into the communities around both congregations.

We recently moved the location of our fortnightly ladies Bible study from the Narre Warren building to the manse. So far this has been a great blessing, as it has made it

family, family and Tinonee community. He has gone to a far better place.

Our congregation had the privilege of hosting the Samburu Mission Conference in February, which Michael Alley started in Kenya. It was a wonderful day

bible studies, a Christian school, conferences held for warriors, young people and women. Just to name a few, the challenges are associated with remoteness, lack of resources and poor living standards. We catered for 118 people, with people coming as far





easier for ladies to come from both congregations and has led to a significant increase in attendance. We would appreciate prayer for the Lord’s continued blessing on the ladies as they gather to study the Word and pray.

We intend to begin evening worship in the second half of April, meeting at 5:30pm in Narre Warren. Please pray for David as he seeks to balance ministry between the two congregations and considers what ways to reach out into the surrounding communities. We plan to introduce the combined Sing Psalms and Scottish Psalter to the congregation, changing Psalters out of a desire to see more unity and uniformity in worship. Please pray that this will prove to be a blessing to all.

Like with many other congregations, a number of our older members are facing ongoing challenges and need prayer as they navigate the many decisions they have to make as they draw closer to the day the Lord takes them to glory. We pray that in old age

when others fail, they will still bring forth fruit until the day the Lord Jesus takes them to be with him.

* * * * *

St Georges

[Report by Alex Steel]

Need to move

from the church Building

After receiving a report from the church builders on the condition of the ceiling and a report from a hygienist company indicating a high level of mould in the building it became necessary to relocate to another venue in which to hold our services.

Because the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts where we previously met no longer provides venue hire, the Deacons’ Court has made arrangements to meet in the Workers’ Education Association’s (WEA) rooms 72 Bathurst Street, commencing on Wednesday 8th April. The rooms are approximately 6 minutes walk from the church in Castlereagh street.

Service times remain unchanged: Lord’s Day - 10:30 am and 6:00 pm; Wednesday Prayer Meeting - 7:00 pm.

Church Restoration and Repairs

Progress during March included:

- Continued preparation of replacement of damaged roof timbers.
- Removal of some interior church cornices.
- Continued workshop repairs of steeple louvers, leadlight windows and installation of new stones in the spire .

* * * * *

Ulverstone

[Report by Zach Dotson]

In Ulverstone, we are feeling very encouraged! We have had a family who were previously members of our fellowship return to us from the mainland.

We are further enjoying our new fuel shortage schedule, in order to combat rising fuel prices for our very spread-out congregation. Thankfully, this has the added benefit of encouraging evening attendance, and also allows for more fellowship within the congregation as we are having lunch together every week now.

We hope this will not only allow for greater attendance and fellowship, but also for real Spiritual benefits. In the midst of this time of difficulty, it is our hope that the Ulverstone Congregation will grow in nearness to Christ.



Report on a Visit to South Africa

By Dennis Muldoon

Note: the following two reports are included in the report of the Missions Committee to Synod 2026.

Die Gereformeerde Kerke in South Africa (GKSA)

On 16 September 2025 we flew from Nairobi, Kenya, to Johannesburg, South Africa, a flight of just over 4 hrs. We were met by Rev Anton Dednam a minister in the GKSA, a reformed, psalm singing (not exclusively), and Afrikaans speaking church, with a few English-speaking congregations. South Africa has many languages, but English is the official language. Anton took us to his home in Waverley a suburb of Pretoria. On the way we passed his church in Rietvlei; we came back the day after on our way back to Johannesburg. Anton and his wife, Eneke, kindly hosted us for three days. How did we know Anton? We met him in India two years previously at the synod of the Presbyterian Free church of Central India and kept in touch. His church has sent a missionary to India.

I knew very little about this ‘sister’ church and was keen to learn more, which I did with the help of Anton. He took us to visit a church school which his children attend; the school principal had relatives in the Free Reformed Church in Perth. Anton took us with his family to a

wildlife park to see zebra, deer, and rhino. In the evening Anton had a board meeting at the nearby tertiary college, so in his absence we enjoyed a Braai (BBQ) with his family and church friends. The Afrikaans community is large and influential in the nation. We learnt something of their history through a visit to Voortrekker monument and a museum, the people who, after conflict with the Zulus and other tribes, settled the land.

Afrikaans speaking churches are large and numerous. There are some 378 GKSA churches, and Anton’s church has over 300 members, with a small English-speaking congregation. The Free Reformed Church is another, but related, group. These churches have a background in the reformed church in the Netherlands and as such hold the three forms of unity. They were exclusive psalmody churches but now have hymns based on Scripture (I was not present of the Lord’s Day to experience worship). They have organs in their churches. The

GKSA set up what has become the Northwest University in Potchefstroom, but the theological faculty is no longer under their control. They withdrew from this institution in 2023. They formed the Reformed Theological Academy, but this is not accredited; most training is online. They are challenged with regard to a place for theological training. Mukhanyo Theological College in Cape Town is a possibility. All this has implications for Dumisani in the Eastern Cape which had accreditation with NW University.

The GKSA church has supported the work of Dumisani from the beginning. We met three board members, two of whom were from the GKSA church in East London. It was encouraging to see reformed church leaders taking active leadership in Dumisani and encouraging the principal. One member, Tinus, graciously accommodated us in his guesthouse for four days

The GKSA is a member of the ICRC and has sister church relations with the CRCA and Free Reformed Churches here in Australia, as well as the RCNZ. I suggest the PCEA develop closer relations with the GKSA, initially by inviting them to send a representative to our Synod. They may have a limited budget but that does not preclude us issuing an invitation.



Dumisani Theological Institute and Bible School

Growing up in the PCEA, I heard about mission work in South Africa, mainly through Dr J.C. Andrews from Wauchope, a medical missionary to South Africa and later my minister in Taree for some years. I was thankful when Synod 2025 agreed to support my visit to Dumisani while I was in Africa. We visited the home of Dr Andrews and the clinic from which he operated. His medical mission work pre-dated Dumisani, which was established in 1978. The PCEA has supported Dumisani in conjunction with the Free Church of Scotland since the start. We were shown the library that Peter and Lindy Gadsby set up in 1996 with financial help from the St Georges congregation. Prof Allan Harman later sent over 1000 books for the library, and visited twice as a guest lecturer.

Dumisani was established after four groups met in 1978: the GKSA in East London, another GKSA church, the Free Church in SA and the Free Church of Scotland. It moved from Dimbaza to its current location in King Williams town in 1985 (see ‘Voices of Thanksgiving’ by Jack and Nancy Whytock). It began with an old Anglican

church (now the library) and has expanded onto two neighbouring blocks. Accommodation for students is still limited making it difficult for full-time students to

enrolled at Dumisani doing certificate, diploma and BTh courses. The latter study through Mukhanyo in Cape Town. Dumisani offers ten bursaries for full-time students. The students were on leave when we arrived; Wilbert Chipenyu, the principal, graciously stayed back to assist us. He also called some day-students to come and meet us. These were mature-age students, including a number of women, from a range of churches including Pentecostal churches.



attend. The day we left Sharon, the registrar, told of two young men from Port Elizabeth wanting to come but, ‘Where would they stay?’ she asked. A house next to this old church, which has been offered to Dumisani for just over \$A100,000, would alleviate the problem of accommodation. We prayed that the Lord would provide this for the college.

A total of 53 students were

They came looking for Bible teaching which Dumisani was pleased to give. Some had accepted women leadership in the church because they did not know what the Bible teaches.

Wilbert, the principal, is a member of the GKSA in East London. Ike Magdla, the vice principal, is a minister in the Free Church in SA; other teaching is from visiting men. On the Lord’s



Day, Wilbert took us to a Free Church a short distance from a town called Alice. This town is historic as the home of Presbyterian mission work in the Eastern Cape; a college set up by missionaries is now the Fort Hare University. The church was a simple building without electricity or running water - just pit toilets! Yet the women

provided lunch for everyone after the service. I met the eight elders before stepping into the pulpit to preach. Ike translated into the Xhosa language; this was one of seven churches under his ministry. The women were all dressed in a blue and white uniform. They sang the psalms heartily and joined in the Lord’s Supper by coming forward

one by one to the table. Two children were baptised. But there was noticeable lack of younger men.

We enjoyed a couple of days in East London before flying back to Johannesburg, and then home to Sydney, a 12-hr flight. All buildings in this city, as well as in King Willams town, are surrounded by

high walls with electrified wire on the top. Security is big business! These cities showed signs of decay, since the end of Apartheid I presume. But we never felt unsafe as we moved about in the day. We knew the Lord was watching over us as folk back home prayed for us each day.

Report on a Visit to Sri Lanka

By David Kerridge

Note: the following is included in the report of the Mission Committee to Synod 2026.

In November 2025, the Clerk, accompanied by his daughter, was able to visit Sri Lanka on behalf of the Missions Committee. The intention was to investigate the work of the Free Church Continuing Mission established at Vavuniya and report back to Synod 2026 with an evaluation.

After an initial few days of orientation to Sri Lanka, in part guided by Jesudas and Kavidara, two members of the church and students from the mission’s Melville Theological Institute, we arrived at Vavuniya, the administrative centre of the eponymous district in the Northern province of Sri Lanka. The Tamil-speaking north is a predominantly rural area. During the trip we were able to visit each of the centres described below and the Clerk spent a week lecturing at the Melville Theological Institute.

Rev. Shanmugam N V Partheepan is the sole minister of the Free Church Continuing Mission work – the “Reformed Protestant Mission” as it is known. The work is centred in Vavuniya, with two other centres in surrounding dis-

tricts. One at Kilinochchi (in Kilinochchi district), 80kms north of Vavuniya, and another at Puthukudiyiruppu (Mullaitivu district), approx. 73kms north-east of Vavuniya (mercifully abbreviated for foreigners to “PTK”). There is a very productive farm on about 4 acres located at PTK that has been started by the mission. It grows peanuts, bananas, king cocoanuts and eggplants (brinjals) to feed church members, with the surplus sold locally. There are plans to introduce goats to sell for meat. There is also a pre-school (“Knox Christian Preschool”) run from the hall at the back of the church. Another Preschool has been established in Vavuniya as an outreach in the centre of a very poor area of predominantly Hindu day-labourers and their families.

The Melville Theological Institute is a college taught with online lectures and intensive face-to-face sessions from visiting lecturers from Scotland, the US and Australia (Rev. Tim McGlynn) to train men for ministry, office-bearing and church planting in Sri Lanka. Students complete a 24-month course in Biblical Studies, based on the FCC curriculum. Topics cov-

ered include OT introduction and preaching Christ from the Old Testament; New Testament Survey; Systematic Theology; Historical Studies; Hermeneutics and Homiletics; Practical Theology; and Church Principles. During our short time, we had 8-10 students, ranging in age from mid-20s to late middle age, all at varying levels of achievement. All are required to deliver sermons to the class, and each is assessed by their fellow students.

The work is thriving and growing with hopes of expansion to Trincomalee, a city approximately 90kms to the east. However, humanly speaking, it depends on the tireless work of Rev. Partheepan himself. Men are being trained up, and there is hope that a couple at least will be ready soon to support Partheepan in the work. Fundamentally, the work belongs to the FCC, and there is some financial support from Christian NGO’s in the Netherlands. Notwithstanding, it would be good if we could add our support, in whatever way the Synod determines, to build up a Reformed presence in Sri Lanka.

April Search Work

“With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!” Psalm 119:10

Senior and Intermediate

(Intermediate omit questions 1 and 4)

1 Thessalonians 1

1. Why were the Thessalonians an example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia? (2 verses)

1 Thessalonians 2

2. Why did the way they received the word of God cause Paul to thank God?
3. Who would be Paul's hope, glory and joy at the Lord's coming? (2 verses)

1 Thessalonians 3

4. When Timothy came with good tidings [good news] of their faith and love, what effect did it have on the apostle? (2 verses)

1 Thessalonians 4

5. Who had taught the Thessalonians to love one another?
6. What will happen when the Lord descends from heaven? (2 verses)

1 Thessalonians 5

7. What has God appointed us to receive instead of wrath? (2 verses)
8. Why are we in everything to give thanks?

Junior

Daniel 3

1. What would happen to those who did not fall down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? (1 verse only)
2. What was the answer of Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-nego when they were brought before the king? (3 verses)
3. How many men did the king see in the midst of the fire?
4. Had the three young men been touched by the fire?

Find the verse(s) in the Bible that answer the questions, write/type them out, and send to:

Mrs Irene Steel

18/1-55 West Parade, West Ryde NSW 2114

or Email: iesteel@gmail.com

A book voucher is awarded at the end of each year to children who send in the answers.

April Prayer Points

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers.” 1 Thessalonians 1:2

Wednesday, 1st: At last year's meeting, it was resolved: “The Lord's blessing upon their work and Synod gives thanks to the Lord for witness.” Please pray for the opportunity and privilege to be involved in the work of missions at home and abroad, both in giving, in praying and being directly involved during this past year.” Pray for the work of Dr Dickson in Delhi, India.

Thursday, 2nd: At last year's meeting, it was affirmed that synod “gives thanks to God for the churches with whom we have formal fraternal relations and for those churches with whom we have

Friday, 3rd: Please pray for the family and friends of Paul Dyson of the Manning congregation, who passed away on the 21st of March after a long battle with cancer.

Saturday, 4th: Pray for the wedding

of Katherine Forbes and Lachlan Bosveld taking place in Geelong today.

Sunday, 5th: WCF 21.6 states: “Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the Gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere, in spirit and truth.” Give thanks for our church buildings, acknowledging at the same time that where we worship pales in significance to who

April Prayer Points

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers.” 1 Thessalonians 1:2

and how we worship.

Monday, 6th: Pray for the ministry of the Brisbane congregation.

Tuesday, 7th: Pray for the Brisbane office-bearers: for Rev Jim Klazinga; for elders Stewart Carswell and Wes Hanna; and for deacons Keith Schmidt and Matthew Schmidt.

Wednesday, 8th: Pray for the work of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship.

Thursday, 9th: It was resolved at last year’s meeting, “that Mr Tso be the Moderator-Elect for 2026.” Pray for Robin as he prepares to moderate this year’s synod meeting next month.

Friday, 10th: Give thanks for the 12 February birth of David Phillip O’Dell to Nic and Amelia of the Hunter congregation.

Saturday, 11th: Give thanks that Hainian and Naomi Yu and the Brisbane congregation look forward to the baptism of Elowyn Yu tomorrow.

Sunday, 12th: John Owen, in his collected works, writes, “the principal work of faith, whilst we are in this world, is to behold this glory of God, as so represented unto us in Christ.... The end, I say, why God communicates a spiritual, supernatural light unto the minds of believers, is that they may be able to discern the manifestation and revelation of his glory in Christ; which is hid from the world.” Pray that God will work through the preaching of the Word in our services today to enable those assembled to discern the manifestation and revelation of his

glory in Christ.

Monday, 13th: Pray for those attending the funeral of Paul Dyson, being held today in Tinonee, that the Spirit may enable them to trust in Jesus Christ and find strength and comfort in him.

Tuesday, 14th: Pray for the ministry of the Ulverstone congregation.

Wednesday, 15th: Pray for the Ulverstone office-bearers: for Rev Zach Dotson, for elder Martin Pilgrim, and for deacon Robert Hingston.

Thursday, 16th: Pray for the work of Mark and Rahel Landrum of the International Mission for Jewish People.

Friday, 17th: Pray for the presentation from Dr Tas Walker of Creation Ministries International taking place tonight in Brisbane.

Saturday, 18th: Give thanks for the recent wedding of Tomassi and Kakala of the Hawkesbury Nepean congregation.

Sunday, 19th: From a prayer entitled, ‘Christlikeness’ from ‘The Valley of Vision’ – “Teach me the happy art of attending to things temporal with a mind intent on things eternal. Send me forth to have compassion on the ignorant and miserable. Help me to walk as Jesus walked, my only Saviour and perfect model, his mind my inward guest, his meekness my covering garb. Let my happy place be amongst the poor in spirit, my delight the gentle ranks of the meek.” Pray that those attending our services today may be strengthened and encouraged to

walk as Jesus walked.

Monday, 20th: Pray for the ministry of the Geelong congregation.

Tuesday, 21st: Pray for the Geelong office-bearers: for Rev John Forbes, and for elder Donald Ramsay.

Wednesday, 22nd: Pray for the continuing ministries of the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India.

Thursday, 23rd: Give thanks that the Brisbane congregation could welcome Robyn Klazinga as a communicant member.

Friday, 24th: Pray for the elderly members in our congregations.

Saturday, 25th: Pray for the St Georges congregation as they adjust to temporarily not being able to worship in their church building.

Sunday, 26th: Pray that the worship we offer today may concentrate our hearts on the reality of the glorious work of the triune God.

Monday, 27th: Pray for the ministry of the Melbourne congregation in Narre Warren and Carrum Downs.

Tuesday, 28th: Pray for the Melbourne office-bearers: for Rev David Lachman, and for the assessor elders serving on session.

Wednesday, 29th: Pray for the ministry of Rev. Shanmugan Partheepan in the Reformed Protestant Mission in Sri Lanka.

Thursday, 30th: Pray for the Hastings congregation as they make final preparations to host next month’s synod meeting.

