



Christ Church Bundaberg

PARISH PROFILE

Region

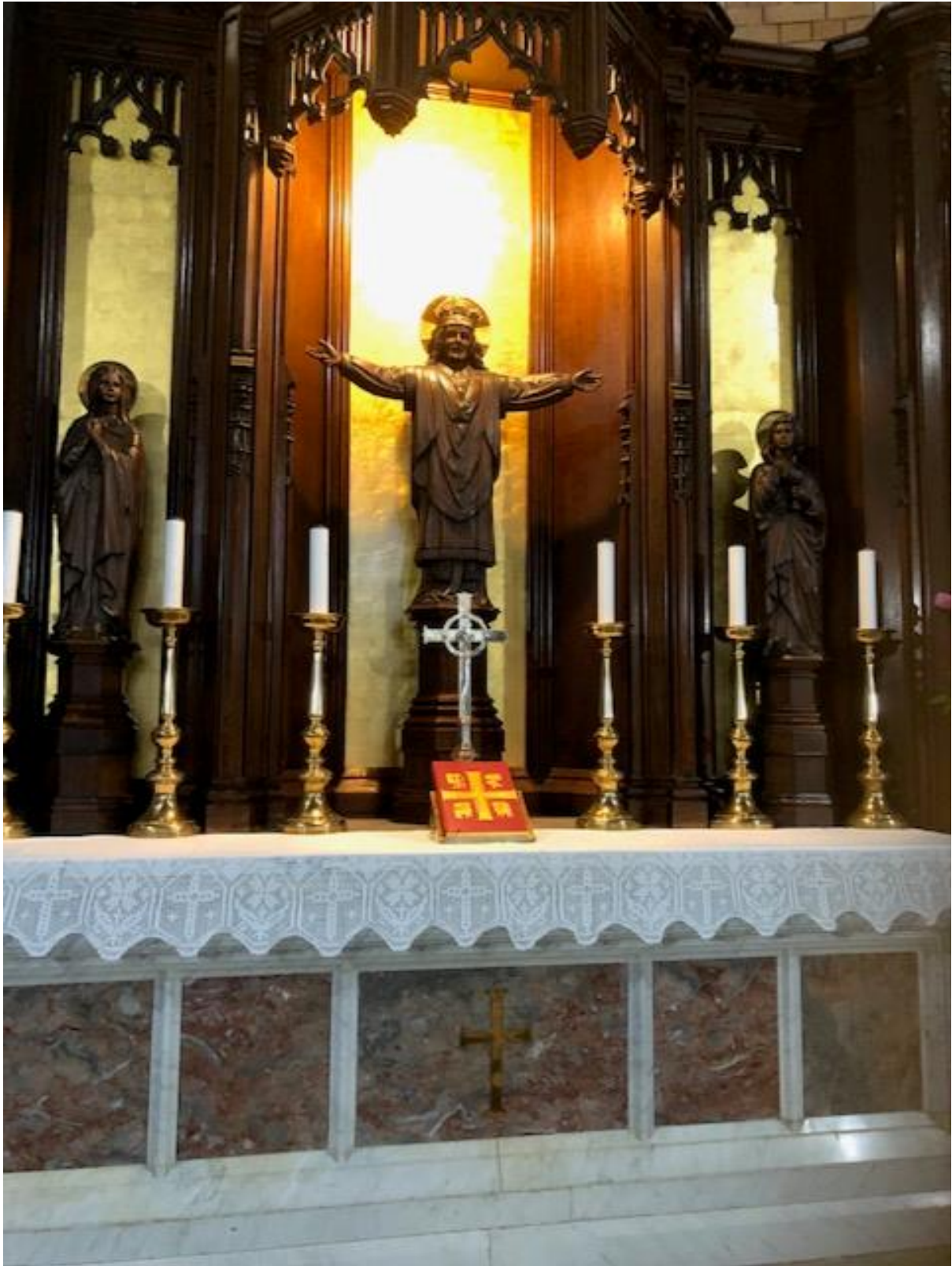
Bundaberg is a large regional town in the northern part of southeast Queensland. In 2021 the population of the Bundaberg Region was 99,216 (an increase of almost 7% since 2016), and the Regional Council area is 6,451 square kilometres. About 90% of the land is natural forest or land used for agricultural purposes. It is expected that the population will grow, and both primary and secondary industries will continue to flourish.

The Anglican Church has maintained a strong presence in the region. There are seven parishes in the Area Deanery of Burnett: Bundaberg, Bundaberg West, Goonaneman (including Biggenden, Brooweena, Childers, Gin Gin and Woodgate), Gayndah (including Mt Vincent), Mundubbera with Eidsvold and Monto, Hervey Bay (including Burrum Heads), and Maryborough (including Granville). Bundaberg, Bundaberg West, and a large proportion of the Parish of Goonaneman, are situated in the Bundaberg Region local government district. The Parish of Bundaberg is the most northerly parish of the Diocese of Brisbane.

The ancient people of the Region are the Taribelang and Bunda people. Aboriginal people constitute 4% of the population. British settlement started in the mid nineteenth century and the Town of Bundaberg was surveyed in 1868. It became a municipality in 1880 and a city in 1913. Sugar cane growing and milling have been main industries for over a century. This is supplemented by beef grazing, fruit and vegetable growing, macadamia nut growing, rum distilling, service industries, and manufacturing. The unemployment rate for the March 2022 quarter was 6.2% (the Queensland regional rate for the same period was 4.7%). There are about 600 homeless people living in the Region, and the primary cause of homelessness is identified as family and domestic violence. There is limited rental accommodation and during the past twelve months there has been a significant increase in property rents. House prices have greatly increased.

Parish of Bundaberg

There are three Anglican Churches in the Parish of Bundaberg; the Bundaberg Parish Church of Christ Church, the Bargara Church of Saint Peter, and the Burnett Heads Church of Saint John the Divine. There is one Church in the neighbouring Parish of Bundaberg West, the Church of the Good Shepherd. There is one Anglican school in the Parish, St Luke's Anglican School, Metzger's Street, Kalkie. At present (October 2022) there are 926 Kindergarten to Year 12 students, 115 children attending the Early Learning Centre, and 150 members of staff. It is expected that the school population will grow in 2023. Meilene Home for the Aged is situated next to St Luke's Anglican School. At present there are 64 residents and, with the completion of extensions in January 2023, this will increase to 89 residents. On the Meilene site there are 26 independent living units. Meilene conducts home care for the elderly, and it is regarded as a major provider of services for senior citizens in the Bundaberg Region.



High Altar, Christ Church

Christ Church is a large brick Gothic revival style building completed in 1927, and it is regarded as one of the chief 'heritage' buildings of Bundaberg. The Church is in good condition, and in recent years the Moeller Organ has been restored, five bells have been placed in the War Memorial Tower in 2019 to complement the 1935 tenor

bell, the external concrete sections of the building (including the spire, door and window frames, and dado rails) have been treated with lime wash, the stained glass windows have been restored, new carpet laid in the central aisle and in the area in front of the chancel and the public address system has been replaced. The asbestos tile roof will need to be replaced in the next 20 years but there are no significant water leaks in the building.



Parish Hall (top) and Op Shop exterior

Adjacent to the Church is the Parish Hall that was constructed in 1959. This includes a large auditorium, an 'op-Shop', an 'Op-Shop' storage and processing room, a 'supper room', an administrative office, and offices for both the parish priest and the assistant priest. The stage and the area under the stage are used for storage. In recent years there have been negotiations with the Regional Council for the sale of the Parish Hall and the redevelopment of the site for the development of a Civic Cultural Precinct. The Parish Council has expressed a strong willingness to progress the proposed development, but financial compensation from the Regional Council has been deemed to be insufficient. If the project were to go ahead there would need to be sufficient funds to construct new hospitality and office space.



The Bargara Church of St Peter is a small wooden building constructed in 1951. Although members of the congregation are very fond of the structure, it is inadequate for present needs. Next to the Church is a Hall. This was constructed in 1955 and it has remained a popular venue for both congregation and community activities. Both structures are in good repair.

For six years there had been conversations with the Bundaberg Regional Council for the purchase of the Bargara Cultural Centre, a large community structure that is situated on the corner of Hughes and Watsons Roads, Bargara. With minor alterations this building could serve as a new Church. In conjunction with the Regional Bishop and Diocesan building and financial staff, the Parish Council has been considering the sale of the existing buildings and land in Bauer Street, and the purchase of the Cultural Centre. The Regional Council set a price for the Cultural Centre, but the members of the Parish Council considered the price as being too high to allow the project to proceed. Following this decision, the Parish Council has been considering the redevelopment of the Bauer Street site for the construction of a

childcare centre. This would include a space that could be used for Sunday and weekday liturgies.

The Burnett Heads Church of St John the Divine was constructed in 1938. It is a stone and asbestos clad structure, and, with external timber framing, it has a faux Tudor appearance. It is a small Church situated on a small block of land. Behind the Church there is a small hall for congregation events. The Church and Hall have been well used for quiet days as well as meals following the Saturday evening Eucharist.

There have been 7 small churches in the Parish that have been sold in the past thirty years: Gooburrum, Sharon, North Bundaberg, Kensington, Thabeban, East Bundaberg and Buss Street Bundaberg. There have been no discussions about the closure of any more churches.



St John the Divine, Burnett Heads

Mission Statement

Parish Mission Statement is “to meet people in the journey of life and draw them into a relationship with God and one another”. This Statement was devised many years ago, but it is still relevant. The Statement is printed on the Sunday ‘pew bulletin’ and, until recently, it was inscribed on the northern end of the Parish Hall.

The Mission Statement is not a Mission Action Plan. For the past six years the chief issue for the Parish Council has been the provision of a new Church for the people of Bargara. Population growth in Bargara has been strong: in 1956 there were 3000 people living in Bargara, in 1997 6000 people, in 2008 7000 people and in 2022 8589 people. The population is three times the number than it was when the

Church was constructed. It is important that a Mission Action Plan be developed by the Parish Council.

Staff

There are two stipendiary priests and two licensed retired priests in the Parish. The work of the retired priests has been invaluable. There are three part-time lay staff; a vergers/cleaner, an office secretary, and a bookkeeper. The stipends of the clergy are determined by Diocesan authorities and the wages of the lay staff are determined by State Awards. There is a good working relationship with the staff.

Anglican Support Ministries

The social caring ministry of the Parish is under the 'umbrella' of Anglican Support Ministries. Until 2020, this was known as 'The Dorcas Society', a reference to the good works of Tabitha, or Dorcas, in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 9. The name was changed in recent years for reasons of clarity. The main activities are a Monday morning Emergency Relief Bank (the provision of tinned and packet food), a Thursday 'Soup Kitchen Luncheon' (a hot meal followed by a dessert catering for up to 60 clients), a Saturday late afternoon 'Sausage Sizzle Meal' (catering for up to 30 clients), the provision of a shower, a clothes washing machine and a clothes dryer, and a Friday morning 'Smoko' (tea and coffee served with raisin toast and catering for up to 15 clients). Fresh fruit, vegetables and bread are made available to clients at other times. Anglican Support Ministries are well supported by business houses and people living in the local community. 'Grub runs' from a local 'Bikers' Church' and support from the families of St Luke's Anglican School are invaluable. Anglican Support Ministries do not rely on Parish financial contributions, and it is self-supporting. The four expressions of Anglican Support Ministries are regulated by a committee that reports to the Parish Council.

Both the churchyard and the adjacent public park attract homeless people. Occasionally, people have sheltered in the entrance areas of the Parish Hall or in tents placed in the vicinity of the Church. There has been a clear and stated policy of treating homeless people with respect, and people have been asked to reside for no more than two consecutive nights on Church property. This policy has been in the interests of their personal safety.

There is inadequate accommodation for the homeless in Bundaberg. The Church has not provided accommodation and there are no plans to purchase a property as a 'shelter'. The Parish offers strong support to 'Edon Place', a shelter for women who have been victims of domestic violence.

In the past year there has been the establishment of two new ministries in conjunction with Anglican Support Ministry; 'Street Law' (pro bona legal advice to clients) and 'Vacseen' (the provision of influenza vaccines).



Ecumenism

The Parish maintains strong links with other churches in the community. The clergy regularly attend the Bundaberg Ministers' Association monthly meeting and they participate in ecumenical religious education in local State primary schools. Three times a year there is a combined churches service at the Bundaberg Christian College and the clergy and people of the Parish have been invited to attend. An important ecumenical endeavour is 'Bethlehem Live', a recreation of biblical Bethlehem in the yard of Bundaberg Central State School. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, 'Bethlehem Live' did not operate in 2020 and 2021. The Ministers' Association intends to resume the event in December 2022 and the people of the two Anglican parishes will be participating.



"Church Crawl", Day of Pentecost, 2022

The strongest ecumenical links have been with the Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches. For the past three years, Roman Catholics and members of the Uniting Church have participated with Anglicans in a Pentecost 'Church Crawl'; a procession with three stations and readings of the Bible passages. This has been an Anglican initiative, and, at Christ Church, there has been an afternoon tea in the churchyard following the procession. Last Pentecost over two hundred people participated.

Monthly prayer meeting has been held at either Christ Church or Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church. It has been strongly supported by Anglicans. About a dozen attend and a morning tea has been offered to participants.

The Anglican Parish of Bundaberg has given strong support to Scripture Union sponsored chaplaincy in local State schools. Every year there has been various fund-raising events (including a Mayoral breakfast). This year, the profits of the Ecumenical Luncheon that was hosted by the Anglican Church went to the work of chaplaincy.

Three members of the congregation participate in religious instruction in local State primary schools. The Parish offers financial support for this work and, in conjunction with the Parish of Bundaberg West, fund raising events are held every year.

St Luke's Anglican School

St Luke's Anglican School is an integral part of the Parish. The school has over 930 students and it maintains a strong Anglican identity. The Parish clergy regularly attend events and often speak at weekday school liturgies. Important celebrations are held at Christ Church and the clergy have been encouraged by the Principal to 'walk through' the school yard and engage with students. When there has been a priest chaplain, he/she has been invited to assist with weekend liturgies in the Parish.

There have been the very few school families attending services in the Parish, and this is an issue that needs considerable attention.

Liturgies

The Parish's liturgical programme is busy.

Every Saturday afternoon at 6.00 pm there is the first Lord's Day Eucharist in the Parish at the Burnett Heads Church of St John the Divine. It is a small congregation, and about 10 people attend regularly.

There are two celebrations of the Holy Eucharist at Christ Church every Sunday. The first, at 7.00 am, is a traditional Sung Mass celebrated from the High Altar. The Church has an excellent choir, and choral scholarships though St Luke's Anglican Church have been provided to teach musicianship and enhance the performance of the Liturgy. The two annual scholarships (\$2000 per recipient) for students at St Luke's Anglican School are funded from the profits of monthly lunchtime concerts at Christ Church. The second service is less traditional. A data projector with a retractable screen have been installed in the Church, and a music group of singers and instrumentalists assist. Following coronavirus disruptions, the number of people

attending Sunday services has declined. Before Covid-19 about 55 people attended at 7.00 am and 65 at 9.30 am.

The words of the Liturgy that are said by the people and the passages of the Bible that are read are printed in the weekly pew bulletin. At present, the hymn books are not used, and, at the 7.00 am Eucharist, the words of hymns are printed on a disposable sheet of paper. At 9.30 am, the words of songs are viewed on a large retractable screen.

The Holy Eucharist is celebrated at the Bargara Church of St Peter at 9 00 am. Before Covid-19 about 45 people attended. In the past, there has been a regular Sunday evening service.

Occasionally, Evensong is celebrated in the Parish Church.

The Parish maintains a daily Eucharist; 8.30 am on Monday, 7.45 am at the Chapel of St Luke's Anglican School, 9.30 am on Wednesday, 8.30 am at St Peter's Church on Thursday and 7.30 am on Friday. A Meditation Group meets every Saturday morning at 8.30 am and there are about 10 regular participants. Following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, the Parish Church has remained open every day. Closed Circuit television is used, and the office secretary can view the presence of people in the Church. Over the years, there have been no significant thefts or vandalism

Pastoral Services

Baptisms, weddings, reconciliations, and funerals are regularly celebrated in the Parish Church. Normally, baptisms are celebrated at the 9.30 am Sunday Eucharist. During the past year (January to October) there have been 21 baptisms, 3 weddings, 7 confirmations, 2 receptions into the Anglican Church and 9 funerals. There has been a sharp decline in numbers of pastoral services in recent years.

Adult Christian Education

Regular 'Sunday Sessions' are teaching and discussion groups that follow the second Sunday morning Eucharist at Christ Church. Biblical, doctrinal, and ethical issues have been discussed, including assisted dying, same-sex marriage, the structure of the Bible, ministry and evangelism, and the Advent themes of death, judgement, heaven, and hell. At present, there is one home Bible study group.

Mothers' Union and Women's Ministry

The Bundaberg branch of AMUA is one of the largest in the Diocese, 45 members. It is the principal group for women. It meets at the Eucharist on the second and fifth Wednesdays of every month. In recent years, AMUA has sponsored 'Sixteen Days of Activism to Combat Domestic Violence' and it has worked closely with the Bundaberg 'Zonta Club' and the 'Rose Batty Foundation'. The group has contacted Mothers' Union branches in Pacific islands that are threatened with climate change inundation. Most of its members are mature aged, and they maintain the AMUA purpose to support Christian marriage and family life.

The St Peter's Guild meets every Tuesday morning in the St Peter's Hall. It is both a fund raising and a friendship group.

Anglican Men's Society

AMS meets on the second Tuesday of every month. There are 10 members. Most participants are of mature age, and it is recognised that the lunchtime weekday meeting time cannot cater for the needs of younger working men. Occasional Saturday morning breakfasts have been held at the Rectory with the intention of attracting younger men. Bundaberg AMS members have attended Provincial conferences and there is a strong desire to connect with Anglican men in Southern Queensland.

Youth Ministry

There is one group that aims to incorporate young people in the worship, faith, and ministry of the Church, 'Kids' Plus'. There are four adult leaders and up to 8 participants. The group is associated with GFS, and there are funds available that support excursions and camping. There has been little support from families associated with St Luke's Anglican School.

The 9.30 am Eucharist on the first Sunday of a month is 'A Kids in Church Service'. Young people are invited to read the scriptures, participate in the prayers of the people, and to engage with older members of the congregation.

Lay Liturgical Assistants

Liturgical Assistants serve at Christ Church and St Peter's Church. All are licensed by the Archbishop. All are given authority to administer the Holy Communion at Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist and to take the reserved sacrament to the sick and shut-in in hospitals, aged care facilities, and private homes. None are given authority to preach, and, except for ministry in aged care facilities, none work alone. It is a ministry that is liturgical and pastoral, and many members of the Church are grateful for their work.

One parishioner, Dr Howard Kingston, has been appointed as the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. He organises the Holy Communion for people at home or hospital.

There are 6 aged care facilities in the Parish: Meilene Home of the Aged (an Anglican facility where a service is held twice a month), Pioneer Lodge, Gracehaven, TriCare (one service a month), Bolton Clark Home at Bundaberg North (one service a month and one visitation of residents a month) and Palm Lake (one service a month). The Parish of Bundaberg West is responsible for ministry at Argyll Lodge and Riverlee.

Music

The standard of music is high. The chief musicians at the Parish Church are a retired professional musician and a retired music teacher. At St Peter's Church, the musician is a retired music teacher.

At the 7.00 am Sunday Eucharist, the Moeller organ is played. The choir is directed by a retired and gifted opera singer and singing teacher. Although the choir is small, it is of a high standard and, every Sunday, they lead the singing of the Mass setting,

they sing the psalm to Anglican chant, and they sing two anthems during the Holy Communion of the people.

At the 9.30 am Eucharist, there is a small music group. This includes a pianist, two adult singers, an adult flautist, and three adolescent instrumentalists. A high standard is maintained.

A retired piano teacher leads the music at Bargara, and recorded music is played at Burnett Heads.

Regular concerts are held in the Church. Once a month, there is a Bundaberg Sinfonietta Concert, and patrons are asked to contribute \$10 to attend. All the funds are directed to the Music Fund, a sub-account of the Parish Council, and money is raised to finance Choral Scholarships and meet other music expenses (e.g., the tuning of the Moeller Organ and the Steinway Boston piano). This year, the winner of Sydney International Piano Competition, Alexander Gadjiev, will be performing. Christ Church is promoted as the home of serious music in the Bundaberg Region, and this attracts large numbers of people who normally do not attend liturgies to the Church.

Finances

There are four sources of finance to assist with the operation of the Parish: freewill offerings, profits from the Anglican 'op-shop', renting of the Bargara Hall, and interest from investments. At present (October 2022), there is a degree of financial stress. This is due to a decline in attendance, low interest rates on investments, and an under-utilisation of the two halls, the Parish Hall and the St Peter's Hall. It is hoped that, with a lifting of interest rates, that there will be an improvement in income.

Churchwardens and Parish Councillors

The Priest-in-Charge meets with the two Churchwardens every week to discuss the governance of the Parish, pastoral concerns, future planning, and the implementation of Parish Council decisions. Very often the Assistant Priest and the Co-ordinator of Pastoral Care attend. This is a very important meeting.

Strengths and Work Areas

The strengths of the Parish are liturgical worship, preaching, adult education and the care of the homeless and the poor. The work areas are engagement with children and young adults, youth ministry and vision for the future. The Churchwardens and members of the Parish Council maintain a strong commitment to the people of the community and seek ways of proclaiming the Gospel and serving the needs of the poor and marginalised.