

Address Preached By Rev Noel Noack,  
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**On the occasion of the Celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of the Gossner Missionaries at Nundah (the first free settlers in Queensland) and the The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at St Paul's Lutheran Church, Nundah.**

**Bible Readings:**

Sunday 16 June, 2013, Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:10,13-15 Nathan's message: You are the man!

Galatians 2:15-21 Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith

Luke 7:36 - 8:3 A sinful woman forgiven; women followers

**Psalm 118.1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.**

(This Bible verse is on the commemorative plaque that is to unveiled after this service)

A warm welcome to Your Excellency, Penelope Wensley, Governor of Queensland  
Commissioner Ian Stewart, of the Queensland Police Force  
Mr Harald Lehmann, Chair of the Gossner Mission, Berlin.

Dear Christian Friends.

Hearty Congratulation and God's blessing to the members of St Paul's, Nundah, you are celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Congregation.

We give thanks to God for 175 years of Lutheranism in Queensland. The first free settlers in this State were a missionary community from the Gossner Mission, of Berlin, which had Lutheran origins.

The two events are closely integrated. Today we are gathering to remember, celebrate and give praise and thanks to God for the faithful pioneers of the past.

The Bible verse which is on the plaque to be unveiled **Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.** (Psalm 118.1) expresses our thanks as we reflect on the history of the past 175 years. Many of you present today are a very real part of that history.

The Bible verse expresses thanks to God not only for circumstances in this world but we sees the love of God extending to all eternity, forever. 175 years or even 150 years are but a brief moment in time, a blip as far at eternity is concerned. God is concerned about our welfare in this world and in eternity. The Psalmist recognises this and proclaims that God's **love endures forever.**

In this perspective we see the amazing and wonderful work of Christ who gave himself for us in death on Calvary. From the very beginning belief in Christ's redeeming death for the sins of the world and his glorious resurrection, by which all believers have the gift

of eternal life, has motivated this congregation and this history, which we are remembering today,

The various participants in this tapestry over time were all committed to Christ, and the peace, joy and hope which he brings to all who trust in him. They wanted Christ's work to be shown and his love to be demonstrated. So we **Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;**

The story that we remember today does not allow for a triumphalist view of history. The human players in this story were sometimes afflicted by tension, conflict and even division. But what is clear is the patient and gracious work of God working in and through them.

That goodness, that gracious love of God demonstrated in Christ, was the motivation for the migration of the first settlers who came in 1838. They were a missionary community sent by the Gossner Mission Society of Berlin to serve, in Christ's name and with his love, the indigenous folk of Moreton Bay. They came under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church, lead by its first Australian moderator, the Rev Dr John Dunmore Lang, who lived in Sydney and after whom Lang Park is named, (we should revert to that name).

It was a group of 18 persons lead by Rev Carl Schmidt. The Gossner Mission held that if it could send a colony of earnest Christians, farmers and artisans, and settle it among indigenous people, the latter would be led to follow the example set by the members of the colony (from FO Thiele p. 3). It was to be Christian mission, primarily demonstrated by Christian example, and through which the Word of God would work.

When Rev Johannes Gossner, the founder of the Mission sent the mission community he said to them: *I promise you nothing; you must go in faith, And if you cannot go in faith you had better no go at all* (Page 519 from WN Gunson's monograph). They went in faith.

They were given a grant of land of 650 acres here at Nundah (it is 20 minutes easy walk due east of us, we did it yesterday in the parade) – they called it Zion's Hill. Running by the land was a creek – they called it Kidron Brook (after the stream running by the biblical Jerusalem or Zion). Today it is known as Kedron Brook. A nearby suburb also carries the name.

Soon after their arrival they built a Church. It was not a denominational Church as such. It was made available to Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists for worship.

Then explorer Ludwig Leichardt visited the mission community in 1843 and was effusive in his praise.

By 1848 the mission had closed. The reason was simple; there was just not enough money to keep the mission going. Besides, the aboriginals did not demonstrate much interest. The pioneers experienced a great deal of hardship and privation because of their lack of funds. The government resumed the land and sold it, mostly to newcomers. Some of the original group bought sections of this original land.

This mission community not only believed implicitly in the goodness and grace of God shown through our Lord Jesus, they also trusted implicitly in his will for their lives. They were admirable pioneers. Many of them stayed in the area, others served in other areas of Australia as Pastors. Their leader, Pastor Schmidt, joined the London Missionary Society. He was sent to Samoa where he died in 1864 (p. 5 FO Thiele). None returned to Germany. But their mission at Zion's Hill, from a human point of view was a failure.

But God had other plans. The story continues. Others German immigrants followed, including others sent from the Gossner Mission. In 1863 new settlers objected "to the conditions (theological) they found in the Church at Zion's Hill. They separated and formed their own Congregation. Pastor Schirmeister ministered to their spiritual needs. He came from the Chatham Islands of New Zealand where he was a missionary for 10 years. In 1866 they built a Church on Nudgee Road, a little over a kilometre north of Zion's Hill. In 1883 they built a new Church on the same location.

In 1894 there was a severe disagreement in the Nudgee Road Church. The trustees of St Paul's Nudgee Road, handed their spiritual leader, Pastor Egen, a notice of dismissal. But not all were happy with this. So the Congregation divided. 39 families formed a new Congregation called "St Paul's Lutheran Congregation, Nundah Street,". Each considered themselves in the right, they were both called St Paul's. The dissenters built a church at Nundah Street, near the railway station.

In spite of this sad division God showed his goodness and enduring love.

Both Congregations prospered. These Congregations, through their Pastors, served a wide area of South East Queensland, ranging from Witta and Caboolture to Toowoomba, ministering to the many new settlers in these scattered communities. This work was foundational to the establishment and growth of the Lutheran Church in Queensland. Many Congregations of the Lutheran Church can trace their origins to this era and the ministry of the Pastors from these Congregations.

In 1925 Pastor Otto Adler accepted the call to St Paul's, Nudgee Road. He was a gifted servant of God under whom the Congregation flourished. He was also very thoughtful. He clearly understood that having such a division in the Lutheran Church was not helpful to Lutheran ministry in the area. Very early he had the youth gathering together for their activities. Ultimately, and with overwhelming support, he was able to unite the two Congregations. This happened in 1945.

The Nundah Street church was shifted to the newly purchased Buckland Road property and rededicated on 21 December 1947. It was used for worship until the new Church was completed. It is now the Church Hall.

This new St Paul's Church was opened with great rejoicing on 22 August, 1948.

This Church is filled with reminders of the past.

The bell is from the 1866 Nudgee Road Church

The impressive roof structure is from Nudgee Road Church of 1883

The three lead light windows in the choir loft were from the chancel of the Nudgee Road Church.

There are two stories regarding the cross surrounded by the circle above the altar. One says it was a plaster cast of the original cross in the Church at Zion's Hill (page 8 second half of the book *St Paul's Lutheran Church Nundah 1863 -2013*), the other suggests it came from the cross in the Nudgee Road Church (*1933 St Paul's Nudgee celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the dedication of the Church. To mark this occasion a metal cross was placed on the rear of the Church was added to celebrate the Gold Jubilee of the dedication of the Church, a plaster cast of which is found in the chancel of the present church, from St Paul's Lutheran Church Nundah 1863 -2013, page Eleven*).

Whatever ... it is a great cross which symbolises the everlasting love of our resurrected Saviour.

The Pews (on the extreme left and right of this Church), the Altar and Pulpit are from the Nundah Street Church.

The use of these significant items in the new Church symbolise well the unity which the Congregation at last experienced.

But this newly united Congregation did not desire to rest on its laurels; rather this unity was the motivation for a focus on Christian service to the community in Christ's name.

In 1974 Zion Court Independent Living Units were dedicated.

1988 Zion Lutheran Home dedicated by Pastor Renner, District President.

1994 the Child Care Centre was dedicated.

1966 the new Nursing home was completed.

Deedar (built on this block just the other side of the manse) was established to house indigenous young people from North Queensland (principally Hope Vale) so they could get a good education at the local high school.

Thank you for those with the vision and drive to establish these projects. God bless you as you consider the possibility of further ambitious development in the area through a revitalisation of this significant real estate.

As we look to the future we can see that this area is changing. It is growing and becoming multi-cultural. Migration is still forming a significant part of this new community. I pray that the Congregation will be confident in sharing that the message of God's everlasting and gracious love in Christ and continue to serve the community in his name. Like those in past *you must go in faith* and be motivated by the words of the psalmist **Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.**  
**Psalm 118.1.**

God bless you in your remembering and praise of him today.

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References:

- Journal – Royal Historical Society of Queensland Vol 6 No 3 1960-1961 – The Nundah Missionaries, by WN Gunson MA PhD.
- One Hundred Years of the Lutheran Church in Queensland, 1938, Revd FO Thiele).
- St Paul's Lutheran Church Nundah 1863 -2013, published by St Pauls Lutheran Church, Nundah 2013.