

# ev grow

God's Plans | Our Story



ev/church

# EV GROW: God’s Plans | Our Story

| WEEK   | GOD’S PLANS                                          | OUR STORY                                                           |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1 | The Church is central in God’s plans for all things  | Making disciples who belong to the Church in ever-increasing number |
| Week 2 | The Church is central to the Son’s glory             | Reaching 10% of the Coast and beyond                                |
| Week 3 | The Church is nourished and grown through the Church | ‘Deep’ uncompromising disciples who are eager to grow               |
| Week 4 | The eternal Church gathering in glory                | Reaching the next generation - ‘until long after we’re gone’        |



# TERM 4 – 2026

## What is EV Grow?

- A time in church-life to be refreshed in our mission together in reaching the Coast with the life-changing message of Jesus.
- An opportunity to celebrate the work God is doing on the Coast, and has done through EV Church over the last 30 years.
- A time to commit to funding the facilities for this mission.

## What you'll find in this book:

- Information about the journey of our property and facilities so far.
- Instructions about how to join in or continue to partner in giving to them.
- Daily Reading Notes and Growth Group Studies to help you get into God's word through our teaching series this term.



# A Message from Andrew Heard

## **This is a wonderfully important time.**

In the foreground is the concern, the need, to raise the giving required to fund the property side of our ministry — to keep the lights on and pay the mortgage, and to further develop our site. This is a legacy activity. Our giving will benefit people well beyond our present number. We are bequeathing to future generations a gift to be used to further the work of Christ in this place. This is giving that keeps on giving!

But beneath this is the far more significant work of recalibrating our whole lives towards the great mission of God to seek and save all people. The reason we're here as a church is because God is at work changing hearts and lives. He's putting our lives back together, remaking us in his own image, that we might know him, love him, and serve him.

During this time we'll give ourselves to remembering this great cause, and to helping each other reshape our thinking, our lives, and our hearts towards these wonderful eternal purposes of God. We need this time! Life gets so consuming. All the week-in, week-out demands slowly whittle away our focus and energy for these eternally important concerns. EV Grow gives us a focused chance to keep our hearts soft to the glorious hope of heaven — for us, our friends, family, workmates, and neighbours.



# EV Grow: God's Plans | Our Story

The activity of being stirred to give is itself also a blessing. How does a person avoid the terrible disease of materialism and greed? By giving away large amounts of money. The very act of giving our money away (money that's not really ours in the first place) heals the heart of self-focus and 'me-ism'. It is actually used by the living God to break us free from ourselves, so that we can learn to be givers — to be generous and sacrificial, just like our Lord.

The most obvious verse in this regard is the beautiful truth that Jesus, though he was rich, became poor, so that we might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). This generosity of life is the very heartbeat of what it is to know the God who is himself love.

So, during this time we pay attention to the need to give significant amounts towards the maintenance and development of our property. But more importantly, we pay attention to our hearts. Are they captured by the great vision God has given us of seeking and saving every person? And are they captured by the wonderfully liberating spirit of sacrificial generosity that seeks to be free of greed and materialism, and is able to give — of all that we have — to further God's great purpose to "make disciples of all nations"?

*Andrew*



# Why have we invested in property & facilities?

**The facilities that God has provided have been very significant for our mission, ministry, and life together - providing a secure base for all we do.**

It tends to be the case that whenever churches are growing and invest resources in property and facilities that growth continues. We've experienced this ourselves over the past 30 years.

When our original morning service was filling up in 1998, growth slowed. We began another morning service, and wonderfully, growth picked up again.

We sent 50 people off to plant the Lakes Evangelical Church and those 50 were quickly replaced. When we moved onto the current property, the church grew. And since we have moved into 'The Round', we have seen growth that would have been impossible without it. We have had many gatherings that have filled the building, and on a normal Sunday we're seeing more than 1,900 adults, children, and young people regularly gathering and welcoming many new people each week!

The property and facilities also provide a wonderful context for church family life. It is so heart-warming to see groups of young people meeting around God's word in the foyer on Friday afternoons and to see Churn kids and then EV Youth swarming across the site. This year we have seen 220 people come to the Life series onsite



to investigate Jesus and many other groups make use of the facilities for Growth Groups throughout the week. Absolutely brilliant!

EV is now also able to host conferences that support and equip ministries across Australia and around the world. Each year the Reach Australia Conference brings 1,300 church leaders to EV, being supported and encouraged to grow healthy ministries; and equipping leaders for church planting.

The facilities are a major and critical resource for our mission. We pray that they will continue to provide a secure and purpose-built base for the ministry of the Gospel on the Central Coast and beyond, for many years to come.

### **EV Grow - where we are today**

There have been a series of giving campaigns over the life of EV, where our church family has provided the funds to buy and develop land and facilities.

Initially, we bought a church office, then land. Then we built The Hall complex and then The Round. In 2021, the houses on the top block were added, and were refreshed to accommodate our team and additional meeting space.



Over the last 20 years, we have now invested more than \$14 million developing EV's property and facilities. Wonderfully, through the generosity of God's people, we were able to keep our borrowings to a maximum of \$7.5 million, and we have now reduced our loan to \$4.2 million.

**A key theme of EV Grow has always been, 'equal sacrifice, not equal gifts'.**

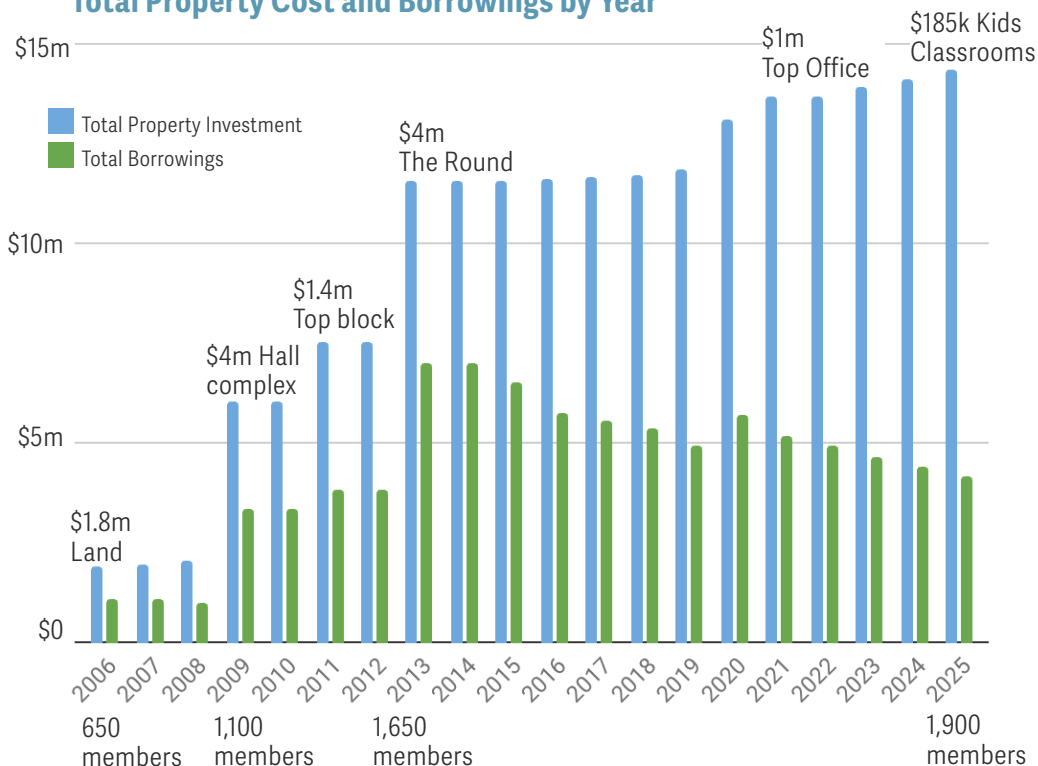
The purchase and development of the EV facilities has only been possible through the sacrificial giving of God's people. Some will give thousands annually, others will give hundreds. It will be right for some, in their current circumstances, to not contribute at all.

In order to repay our loans in 9 years and provide \$100,000 for facility maintenance per annum we require \$650,000 per year. This sounds like a large sum but with 1,500 adults attending EV on a weekend, it is manageable. We hope that everyone will consider contributing to our loan repayments.

Many will continue or extend current payments (pledged previously) and we hope that those who have joined EV in the past three years will now share in this gospel project.



## Total Property Cost and Borrowings by Year



# EV Grow – Your Next Steps

EV Grow aims to encourage our church family to recommit financially to secure our loan repayments, provide for new facility developments and ensure we can maintain our existing buildings, as they age.

In 2023, church families pledged contributions to cover our loan repayments until the end of 2026. We now need to secure our loan repayments for the next three years.

And we'll ask for 'one-off' gifts, to enable us to develop our facilities as we grow (for kids & youth spaces, and the car park).

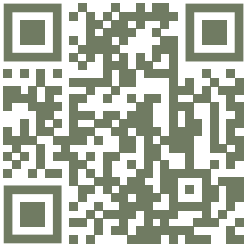
## EV Grow Tax Deductibility

During this next three-year EV Grow period, we're only able to offer 50% tax deductibility on pledges and one-off gifts made through this appeal due to limits on how much of our building and loan costs qualify for deductible-gift status. This means half of what you give will be receipted as tax deductible, and the other half as a general (non-deductible) gift.

**More about EV Grow Tax Deductibility at [evchurch.info/give/EVGrow-Q&A](https://evchurch.info/give/EVGrow-Q&A)**



# How to give to EV Grow 2026



Go to [evchurch.info/ev-grow](http://evchurch.info/ev-grow)

We would like everyone to consider making two types of contributions:

**1. Make a three-year pledge (online)**

To help in planning and budgeting to cover repayments of our church family home loan, pledges should be made by Friday 13 November.

Once your pledge is submitted online, you will receive further details on how to make these pledge payments over the next three years.

AND

**2. Make a one-off gift today (online)**

Make a one-off gift today to enable us to develop our facilities as we grow (for kids & youth spaces, and the car park).

Submit your pledge and one-off gift by Friday 13 November

Paper Pledge Forms are available in the EV Church office

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## Record of My Pledge

**Payment Method:**

Three-Year Pledge:      \$ ..... per year      /      /

Total payments over 3 years =      \$ .....

**One-Off Gift Payment:**

..... date      /      /

Tax receipt requested?

☐ Yes      ☐ No

# Week 1: Introduction

**Church: God's plan for all things is to glorify his Son, in the growing of his body, until the final gathering around his throne.**

God's big plan for the world is wrapped up in Jesus (Ephesians 1:9-10). All things are made through him and for him; he is the head over everything (Colossians 1:16-17).

Because Jesus is at the very centre of God's plan, so is Jesus' Church - we are Christ's body (e.g. 1 Corinthians 12:27), his bride (e.g. Revelation 19:7), and his people (e.g. Titus 2:14).

His Church is both local (a gathering of believers in this world) and universal (all his people across all time gathered around Christ's eternal throne). God holds up this Church to display his glorious wisdom; it is the trophy that displays God's accomplishment of his eternal purpose in Christ (Ephesians 3:10-11). The Church is at the heart of the universe, because Christ is at the centre of God's plans.

**In the next four weeks, we are going to think about Jesus' Church in God's plans. Why we exist, who we are, and what we are to be about.**

As we spend time in this, our prayer is that together we'd know God's purpose for all things, and how this plan includes us, and our participation in his work. And by knowing his purpose, we might live with God's vision for our lives and his world. Let's pray together that God would capture our hearts to change our lives with his plans for all things in Christ and his Church.



# God's plans. Our story – Making disciples in ever-increasing numbers

Everything is created in, through and for Jesus. We see it from the beginning in creation, we see it in the plan to bring salvation, and we see it in the promised future of all things submitting to him and his people around his throne.

God's plan for all things is given expression in church as we gather around him and live for him. However, this can only happen as people come to hear the good news and join the family of God.

There are many problems in the world, and many good 'causes' we could give ourselves to. We live in a creation that groans (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:20). But the groaning of all things will be met in the new creation prepared for God's people. The new creation will be God's gathered people, Church, around the throne of Christ.

If this is the plan for all things, it is our commitment together to preach the gospel of Christ. To obey his command to make disciples, so that many more might join that final gathering. God has a plan to bring all things together. We see this plan most visibly in his Church gathered under him.

**God's ultimate plan brings us to a very practical priority: preaching the good news of salvation to make disciples of Christ in a world that needs spiritual rescue.**



# Week 1: The Church is central in God's

## DAY 1: Everything summed up in Christ

### Read Ephesians 1:1-14

1. There are some astounding truths in this passage, what particularly stands out to you?
2. What words or ideas are repeated?
3. How do you think God wants us to respond?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 1.

**Prayer:** Father, you have loved me with an everlasting love in Christ. It's impossible for me to grasp the depths of the blessing of being in Christ. Help me never forget it.

# plans for all things

## DAY 2: Everything created in, through, and for Jesus

**Read Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3, Ephesians 1:9-11, and Colossians 1:15-23**

1. What connection can you see between these passages?
2. What do these passages help us appreciate about ...
  - a. Jesus' centrality?
  - b. How creation relates to Jesus?
  - c. The future plan for all things in relation to Jesus?
3. In the beginning the Son was there - the Father made all things through the Son, in the Son, and for the Son. In his plan to restore all things, the Son is the one through whom all things are reconciled at the cross. One day, all things will be united in the Son (Ephesians 1:9-10). The Son is so central to all things. Yet it's easy for us to make him fit around us. In what ways do you notice the pressure of competing priorities? How might things be different if life was more centered around the Son?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 2.

**Prayer:** Father, help me appreciate more of who Jesus is and what he has done. May my life be centered around him in worship of him.

# Week 1: The Church is central in God's

## DAY 3: The future for all things and God's children

### Read Colossians 1:15-23 and Romans 8:18-25

1. At different points, lots of noise has been made about the state of the physical world. How does this passage help us understand the state of creation?
2. What is creation looking forward to?
3. God has both our future and all creation's future in his hand. But the key thing the creation longs for is renewal that comes in "the freedom and glory of the children of God". God's primary care has always been his image bearers (e.g. Psalm 8) but, as we saw yesterday, his people will one day live in a renewed world. What priority does this give to the spiritual needs of people in our world even while the world "groans" from physical suffering?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 3.

**THINKING DEEPER:** Will the earth, and all our efforts to improve it, last into eternity?



**Prayer:** Father, give us faith to see things as you see them. Help us see the great need for salvation of people. Please be merciful to save.

# plans for all things

## DAY 4: The sign of renewal in the church

**Read Ezekiel 36:22-28, Ephesians 1:9-10, and Ephesians 3:8-12**

1. In Ezekiel, what does God say he was concerned for, and what did he promise to do about this?
2. What will the gathering of God's people prove about God and his name? How do we see Paul speak of a similar idea in Ephesians?
3. What place does church have in God's plan? How might this shape our attitude towards church?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 4.

**Prayer:** Use Ephesians 3:15-21 to shape your prayers today.

# Week 1: The Church is central in God's

## DAY 5: Jesus' church in the plan for all things

**Read Colossians 1:15-23 and Revelation 5:1-14**

1. What does this passage teach about the final gathering in the heavenly throne?
2. In Colossians 1, Paul speaks about "all things" and then pays particular attention to God's people. What place do you think church has in the plan for all things?
3. If God's plan for all things ends in a gathering of people around Jesus the lamb, what does this mean for our attitude towards church?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 5.

**Prayer:** Use Colossians 1:8-14 to shape your prayers today.

## Prayer points and notes

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 6-7.

# Week 1: Growth Group Study

## Read Ephesians 1:1-14

1. In two's or three's, chat together about the words or ideas that are repeated in this passage.
2. When people think "blessed" what usually comes to mind?
3. What is God teaching us here about true blessing?
4. How is true spiritual blessing better than any other type of being?
5. What might it look like if someone grasps how truly blessed they are in Christ?



## Watch this video together >>

1. What stood out to you, or excited you?
2. How have you seen this vision play out in our church-life together?
3. We want to prayerfully labour together to see 10% of the Central Coast saved and transformed as uncompromising disciples of Jesus. How might we pray towards that end?

## Spend some time praying together:



# Week 2: Introduction

## God's plans. Our story - Reaching 10% of the Coast and beyond

God's plan is to glorify himself: the Father glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father, the Spirit glorifies the Son and Father. This eternal plan of God becomes focused on gathering a people by the Spirit for the Son to the glory of the Father. Church - the gathering of God's people - is not just a nice way to spend the weekend, we do it as those called into the very heart of God's purposes. God's eternal plans have shaped the vision in our story. We proclaim the good news to see real salvation, people who were once lost and heading for eternal condemnation now gathered as his rescued people.

In our story, we have given ourselves a meagre and ambitious task to see 10% of the Central Coast and beyond saved. It's meagre (only 10%). But it is ambitious, EV Church began its life 30 years ago in a lounge room. We are still some way from the 10% but we are grateful that God has already done so much and saved so many. The vision is also ambitious because we long for the world to know Jesus. Our story has included wonderful partnerships with FIEC and Reach Australia to generously give time and resources to others who are holding out the Gospel beyond our region. God's eternal plan is to glorify himself in the saving of his people so it's our story to give ourselves to seeing many more saved on the Coast and beyond.



Life series 2026



Tim and Jess moved to the Coast from Sydney, and were looking for a church that teaches the Bible faithfully and that would be a great place to raise their kids to know and love Jesus. Being part of EV Church, especially the Sunday gathering, is a highlight of their week. Being part of the wider

congregation, all singing together, hearing what the kids are learning in EV Kids, and hanging out after services together.

*“EV really feels like the kind of church where we’re excited to be able to invite friends to come along. We know that they’re going to be welcomed really warmly and also hear God’s Word spoken faithfully.” –Jess*

They’re keen to see EV keep growing — not just in numbers, but in depth, understanding God’s heart for our community and beyond. And personally, they just want to keep watching the kids’ and youth ministries thrive, with their own kids right in the middle of it.

At 16, a friend invited Thea to EV Youth and church. She had no church background, hadn’t really heard of Jesus, didn’t know the Bible, and didn’t really know what “sin” meant.

She had no idea what to expect — but remembers meeting a heap of people, who made her feel welcome. Over time, coming along week after week, asking questions and reading the Bible for herself, Thea came to put her trust in Jesus.



*“Now, coming on a Sunday is the highlight of my week. Being able to share fellowship with other Christians and being able to hear the Word preached and give praise to God with brothers and sisters in Christ, is such a meaningful time for me.”*

*“A moment on a Sunday that really stays with me is being able to chat with the people around me after the sermon and hearing their thoughts and reflections and praying for each other and being able to really apply God’s Word.”*

*“I’d love to see church grow. There’s so many people here already, but not a lot of the Coast knows Jesus yet. And so I’d love for more people to be coming on a Sunday hearing about him.” –Thea*

# Week 2: The Church is central to the Story

## DAY 1: The plan to glorify the Son

**Read John 17:1-6, 1 Timothy 2:9, and Titus 1:2**

1. Last week, we read that God's plan for all things ends in a gathering of people around his throne. This is God's eternal plan. What do you notice about the 'timing' in these passages?
2. If this is God's plan from before creation, what might it mean for our plans to align with his, both our individual plans and our plans as a local church community?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 8.

**Prayer:** "O God, Thy main plan... is to make Christ glorious and beloved in heaven... where one day all the elect will behold his glory and love and glorify him forever... Though here I love him little, may this be my portion at last." (Christ Alone, The Valley of Vision)[1.1][2.1].

## DAY 2: Salvation only in the Son

### Read Ephesians 2:11-18

1. List all the things Christians can be thankful for?
2. What repeated words or ideas do you notice? What points are being made by this repetition?
3. How do you think this passage relates to Ephesians 1:10? What similarities can you see?
4. If God's plan is to glorify his Son, why might salvation only be "in him"? How would our glorifying of Jesus be diminished if we said salvation wasn't only in him?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 9.

**Prayer:** Think of a friend or family member you can pray for. Think of future generations who might hear the gospel in our facilities - pray they'd come to share in the blessing of being in Christ.

# Week 2: The Church is central to the Son

## DAY 3: The spirit will glorify the Son, to the glory of the Father

**Read John 8:54, John 11:4, John 13:32 and John 15:26-16:15**

1. What do you learn about God's glory and the Son's glory?
2. The Father glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father. How does the last passage in John help us see the Spirit's role in glorifying God?
3. The Triune God is united in his work to bring glory to himself. Whatever we say about God's work, it has a 'triune' shape: Father, Son, and Spirit. We never mean to exclude one Person, however, there are particular works we ascribe to them. When the Father glorifies the Son (or when we sing to the Son), we bring glory to the Triune God. How might you seek to glorify God today?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 10.

**THINKING DEEPER:** The Son's glory and the Father's glory were foreshadowed in many ways, particularly through the king of Israel (who was called 'the son of God'). You can read more about this here >>



**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, help me to serve you diligently, praise you joyfully, and obey you lovingly, all for your glory.

## DAY 4: Church partnered for the glory of the Son

### Read Philippians 1:18-26 and 4:10-20

1. What do we learn about Christian partnership in the mission of spreading the good news of Jesus and deepening disciples?
2. What convictions does the Philippian church and Paul have to give time and money to this gospel work?
3. What might it look like for you to be a partner in the mission? What convictions might you need to nourish? What practices might you start?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 11.

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for the wonder of knowing Christ and now being caught up in your plan to see more disciples saved and grown. Give me generosity and courage to partner in the work for the sake of your glory.

# Week 2: The Church is central to the Son

## DAY 5: A growing global church to the glory of God

### Read 2 Corinthians 4:13-15 and Ephesians 2:11-18

1. We've seen you cannot separate the glory of the Son and the glory of God - the plan has always been that God the Father would be glorified in the Son as the Spirit brings the message of Christ to the world, Jew and Gentile, all nations. How do you see Paul's concern for the message of Christ to spread in 2 Corinthians 4:13-15?
2. In 2 Corinthians 4:15, what's the connection between the number of people praising God and his glory?
3. There isn't a soul that Christ does not deserve. How might we pray and prayerfully bend our efforts and resources to seeing "the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 4:15)?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 12.

**THINKING DEEPER:** Can we add to or diminish the glory of God? Think more about this here >>



**Prayer:** Father, we pray for the sake of your glory. Bring many to repentance. Have mercy on the lost around us and those we don't know but who you know - please call them to your Son, for his glory. Raise us up to partner in the work of the Gospel across the world.

## Prayer points and notes

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 13-14.

# Week 2: Growth Group Study

## Read Ephesians 2:11-18

1. What does this passage say about God's Old Testament people, the Jews, and what does it say about Gentiles?
2. Jesus makes a difference for these two groups. What are the ways the difference is described?
3. How should Jesus' work play out in the relationships of Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus?
4. What might it look like for us to keep living as those who've been united together in Christ?

## Watch this video together >>



1. What encouraged you from these stories?
2. Are there other stories you've seen or heard recently from our church that have been an encouragement to you?
3. EV Church started with a few people in a lounge room. But God has been growing this church as he has been growing his whole Church. Let's pray that he might continue to draw people back to himself and to each other.

**Spend some time praying together:**



# Week 3: Introduction

## God's plans. Our story - 'Deep' uncompromising disciples, who are eager to grow

Church is central to God's plan for all things to glorify his Son. It was always God's plan. We live in the period between the first and second coming of Christ, before that final gathering, where the Spirit is working to bring people to the Son. Because the Father is determined to glorify his Son by giving him a people who are his own and because the Son calls on us to make disciples of all nations, it has always been our goal to prayerfully make disciples in ever-increasing numbers. Disciples who truly deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him (Mark 8:31-34).

We prayerfully seek to encourage one another in deep discipleship, uncompromising, clear thinking, warm hearted, and growing in godliness. We want to be a church of disciples of the Son committed to glorifying him, because God's plans are to glorify him in all things, including our lives.





## Rowan - Auckland 'EV' Evangelical Church

*"EV Church and the grounds here have been such a blessing for us as a church in New Zealand. We've brought our team across to the Reach Australia Conference, and we've been able to chat with the different team leaders and pastors here at EV. It's really been a place where our team can be encouraged in the Word, inspired, and chat to different people. It really has been a blessing!*

*It's been so helpful that people here have been able to invest into this facility because it has an impact far beyond just the Central Coast. It's really a hub that's helping other churches understand more of 'How do we think through putting Jesus at the centre of our ministry?' and 'How do we think through seeing more and more people come to know him and grow in him?' I'm just really thankful for the way that people have sacrificially invested in the past, and keep doing so, for the sake of the Kingdom, and we in New Zealand are so thankful for you."*

**–Rowan, Reach Australia Conference 2026**



Reach Australia Conference - 2026

# Week 3: The Church is nourished and grows

## DAY 1: The Church rises together

### Read Ephesians 2:19-22 and Ephesians 4:15-16

1. What is the new identity of a Christian? How does it change for us both individually and as a community?
  
2. What do you think these three phrases mean, and how might they impact your week:
  - a. “Built together” (2:22):
  
  - b. “Speaking the truth in love” (4:15):
  
  - c. “Grows and builds itself up” (4:16):
  
3. How do these passages underline how important God’s word is to growth? How do they underline how important our efforts together are in our growth?

**READING WIDER:** If you’d like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today’s reading is Genesis 15.

**Prayer:** Spend some time praying that the word of God might multiply, that new people would be converted, and that we would be deep in his word so that the body matures.

# rown through the Church

## DAY 2: A growing body, wide and deep

**Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and Colossians 1:24-28**

1. What do we learn about Paul's desire to see people saved?
2. What do we learn about Paul's desire to see everyone mature in Christ?
3. In our church family, we often speak of this as desiring to grow deep (people deepening in their Christian maturity) and wide (more people saved). What motives do you see in Paul for these goals, and how might you cultivate a similar desire in your own life?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 16.

**THINKING DEEPER:** "The mission of the Gospel is as much part of God's plan as the death and resurrection of Jesus" (Andrew Heard, *Growth and Change*). For more on this, grab a copy of *Growth and Change* from the bookstore.

**Prayer:** Father, grow in me more and more a longing to see your people saved and see them grow into that salvation, becoming more and more like Christ. Do this work in me, and please use my prayers and my efforts to humbly pursue this cause.

# Week 3: The Church is nourished and g

## DAY 3: The body of the Son

**Read Genesis 2:20-25, Psalm 45 and Ephesians 5:25-32**

1. Paul speaks of a great mystery. What does he reveal about this mystery?
2. Psalm 45 is a 'royal wedding' psalm. How might it be fulfilled in the coming of the Church (the bride) to Christ (the groom)? (See also Revelation 19:6-8, 21:2, 21:9, 22:17.)
3. Theologians have often spoken of our union with Christ as the "mystical Christ". Not mystical in the sense of unknowable, but because it was once hidden and has now been revealed. What was hidden was that Christ, the Son of God, would be one with his people, the Church. We are his body, his bride, one with him. You cannot separate Christ from his body. What implications does this have for our attitude towards church and our prayers for church?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 17.

**Prayer:** "Deepen in me a sense of my holy relationship to thee, as spiritual Bridegroom... as sinner's friend... You have loved me with an everlasting love... may I love thee as I am loved." (Christ is All, The Valley of Vision).

## DAY 4: Nourishing his body

**Read Jeremiah 23:1-8 and Ephesians 5:25-32**

1. What does God promise to provide for his people in Jeremiah, and how will he provide this?
2. How do we see fulfillment of Jeremiah in Christ's work in Ephesians?
3. Christ loves his bride, he saves her, and he continues to feed and care for her. Not only do we belong to him, but he cares deeply for each of us as members of his body. What does this mean for our eagerness to be fed by Christ and for others to be fed by him?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 18.

**Prayer:** "O source of all good, What shall I render to thee for the gift of gifts, thine own dear Son... his infinity of love beyond the heart's grasp... In him thou hast given so much that heaven can give no more." (The Gift of Gifts, The Valley of Vision).

# Week 3: The Church is nourished and grows

## DAY 5: Nourishing the Church, through the Church

**Read Acts 2:42-47 and Colossians 3:16**

1. What do we learn about the early church?
2. How is Christian community part of God's plan to grow and nourish his people (you could also read Ephesians 4:15-16)?
3. We've seen that Christ nourishes his body through the word. But that word also creates a community of believers who encourage and build up one another. What might it look like for you to play your part as we together "teach and admonish one another"?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 19.

**Prayer:** Thank you for your provision of everything I need to live for you. Help me give of myself, as you have given yourself to me.

# rown through the Church

## Prayer points and notes

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 20-21.

# Week 3: Growth Group Study

## Read Ephesians 2:19-22

1. What are the different ways God's people are described?
2. What are the different images used? What does each image add to the overall message?

## Read Ephesians 4:11-16

3. What similar themes do we see in this passage? What's added?
4. What role does this passage give to every member of the body?
5. What might it look like for us to play our part in this?

## Watch this video together >>



1. What can we be thankful to God for? (Things from the video, or other things the video reminded you of.)
2. How might church be different without our past generous giving to the facilities?

**Spend some time praying together:**



# Week 4: Introduction

## God's plans. Our story – Reaching the next generation – ‘until long after we're gone’

This week we'll see that the Church is at the very heart of God's plans for all things: to glorify his Son, through the growing of his body, until the final gathering around him in glory.

God has a plan for all eternity, bringing his people from all nations and through all ages around his throne forever. Our story has never been about only one generation, as if God was only concerned just for us. His plans go far beyond our region and far beyond our lifetime. Our story has always been focused on deep and transformative next-generation ministry.

We want to partner with parents to encourage our children and youth, that they might know God's love for them in Christ and live boldly proclaiming his name. God's plans will go well beyond our lifetime. It may be many years until the Lord returns, and so we prayerfully invest resources into our younger generations to continue to play their part in God's plans to bring all things around his throne.



### Tahlia's Story

Tahlia moved to the Coast with her family in year 4. A little overwhelming at first, church being a lot bigger than she was used to, yet she still has great memories of EV Kids; the games, the songs, and reading the Bible.

*"So I did the whole pathway... EV Kids, Churn, moved up into EV Youth... So I got to grow up with a bunch of people. I had leaders who invested in me the whole time, and then when I came out of school, I went into leading some younger kids.*

*We're always praying for growth, both in numbers but also in each individual's hearts and their faith. And I think for me, particularly as I think about the girls that I lead, as they are getting older and will be going into night church, I hope for them that they would find a community here that, they would stick. That the word that they hear changes their hearts. It's something I've been praying for for a long time."* –Tahlia



## Emmett's Story

Emmett has grown up at EV! His parents were coming along back when church met at Erina High, and he's been coming since before he can remember.

*"So as I've grown up in EV, in my faith, it's always been a gradual deepening. But I made the decision for myself at Summerfest in Dynamites and decided to proclaim my faith for the first time on my own volition.*

*Sitting under the Bible at EV has taught me to always look to God's Word and how important it is to be reading God's Word and how it speaks to us.*

*What I would like to see from EV in the future is just more people coming along to church, hearing the good news of Jesus and just getting alongside each other more and more."* **—Emmett**

## Chris & Paige's Story

Chris and Paige both grew up at EV. Paige's parents were part of the early group first meeting in the lounge room.

For Chris, going to Phat in high school was key in helping him articulate this faith,

*"Having a leader sort of come alongside and help me see the seriousness of it for myself, not just relying on family belief, or the fact that we come to church, but taking my faith in Jesus seriously."* **—Chris**



Paige has appreciated the love and support of our church family in many hard times, and also the joy of seeing the generational work of the kids and youth ministries.

*"I think the highlight for me would be being an EV Kid myself, and then serving in EV Kids as a leader, and getting to see the different generations of all the different families that have been here.*

*It's an encouragement to have our kids growing up through EV Kids, the firm foundation they are going to get. And we know that that's because of all the work previous generations have put in. And we then see this really lovely interconnection of people that led us, that then we got to lead their kids, and now their kids are leading our kids, hopefully as our kids grow up in 10-15 years time, they get to be involved and they get to lead the next generation."* **—Paige**

# Week 4: The eternal Church gathering in

## DAY 1:

### ‘My sanctuary among them forever’

**Read Ezekiel 37:24-28**

1. What do we learn about God’s future for his people and how it will come about?
2. “I will be their God, and they will be my people” is a recurring phrase across the Bible. Have a look at some of the places it appears, e.g. Exodus 6:7, Jeremiah 30:22, Revelation 21:3. Why do you think it keeps repeating and why is it such a wonderful promise?

**READING WIDER:** If you’d like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today’s reading is Genesis 22.

**Prayer:** Lord, I long for the day where I will be with you forever. Bring quickly the day when your sanctuary comes and dwells with us.

## DAY 2: The eternal Church and the wisdom of God

### Read Ephesians 3:1-11

1. What was the mystery that was hidden and is now revealed (verse 6)?
2. How has God now made this mystery known (verse 10)? For what purpose has he made it known?
3. What is God's view of his Church, and how does it compare with your view?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 23.

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for persevering, growing, and glorying in your Church. Help me to think of the Church in line with your word.

# Week 4: The eternal Church gathering in

## DAY 3: With the Lamb forever

**Read Ezekiel 37:24-28 and Revelation 7:9-17**

1. What fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy can you see in Revelation 7?
2. What can God's people look forward to? How is it possible?  
(See also Isaiah 49:10).
3. What comes to mind when you think of eternal life? How does this passage help you understand what's central in heaven?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 24.

**Prayer:** The future you have prepared for us is beyond words and we can't imagine the joy of heaven. Help us long for this day and long to be with and praise the Lamb who was slain for our salvation.

## DAY 4:

### Worshiping Christ now and forever

**Read Revelation 7:15-17 and Colossians 3:1-16**

1. What does this passage teach about our relationship with Jesus? Our hope? How we should live?
2. What do these passages show us about the connection between our future hope and how we should live now?
3. In Colossians 3, Paul moves from our hope, to the way we ought to live, then to our life together as a gathered community. The connection between our hope and how we live is setting our "hearts on things above where Christ is." We long for his coming, we live for him as King, and we worship him with gratitude. As we gather together under Christ, as we live under him, we do it in anticipation of a future where these things will be perfected. How does our future help us think about the way we gather at church each week?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 25.

**Prayer:** Father, we thank you for Jesus, who forgave us and who lives in us. Strengthen us to live for him, to set our hearts on him and on the things above where he is seated.

# Week 4: The eternal Church gathering in

## DAY 5: Church forever

**Read Ezekiel 37:27-28 and Revelation 21:1-14**

1. What does the angel show John in Revelation 21?
2. Why might there be a blurring of the bride of Christ and the city of Jerusalem in Revelation? How did Ezekiel prophesy this event?
3. God's people, is part of the fulfillment of all things because we are Christ's body, who is the fullness of all things (see Colossians 1:15-23). Church is so central to God's plans because Christ is central, and we are his body. This final passage in our EV Grow series gives us so much to look forward to. How might church feature in our future hope, and how does it help us think rightly about church?

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 26.

**Prayer:** Father, thank you for uniting me to Christ as a member of his body. Weaken all other hopes and grow in me a desire for the future hope of being gathered around Jesus in the new Jerusalem.

## Prayer points and notes

**READING WIDER:** If you'd like to keep up with the plan to read through the Bible in 3 years, today's reading is Genesis 27-28.

# Week 4: Growth Group Study

## Read Ephesians 3:1-13

1. What do we learn about Paul's mission and its importance?
2. What do we learn about the place of the Church in God's eternal plans?
3. How does the Church show the manifold wisdom of God?
4. The gathering of God's people is God's display of his wisdom. How does this help us value gathering each week?
5. How might we approach the gathering differently if we remember the place of church in God's eternal plan?

## Watch this video together >>



1. What's encouraged you from these stories?
2. God's plans are far bigger than our lives and our church. Discuss together the importance of focusing on deepening the next generation.

**Spend some time praying together:**





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# Additional Resources

## **Week 1, Day 3**

### **Will the earth, and all our efforts to improve it, last into eternity?**

These passages may raise questions for you about whether our work matters or not there is a great article from Andrew Heard [here](#) and another great resource from a New Testament Lecturer at Moore College, Peter Orr [here](#);

[Abounding in the Work of the Lord \(1 Cor 15:58\): Everything We Do as Christians or Specific Gospel Work?](#)

## **Week 2, Day 5**

### **Can we add to or diminish the glory of God, what does it mean to glorify him?**

God's glory can be spoken about as "essential" or "declarative". God's "essential" glory - is essential to who he is, changing, adding to, or diminishing this would be changing who God essentially is.

As the unchanging God, his glory in himself cannot be changed just as he cannot change (1 Samuel 15:29; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17). So we cannot add to or diminish his essential glory. Yet, we read of people glorifying God or dishonouring God all through Scripture. It's not that people are somehow changing God, that's impossible, but they are worshiping or glorifying him.

Our glorying of God is often called "declarative" glory - it's what we declare about God. So while God is glorious (essentially) we can ignore or rebel against his glory, or we can glorify him (declaratively). The essential glory of God is not a reason to not bother glorifying God, that's trying to make two different uses of words mean the same thing. We are made to enjoy him and glorify him forever, its our purpose, its what he calls us to. Part of the wonder of this calling is that he is a God worth glorifying because he is unchanging in his eternal glory - a god who we could add or diminish glory from wouldn't be worthy of the glory we ought to give to the true and