



Bathurst Uniting Church

Sharing God's love by connecting people to God;
people to people; and people to community.

Newsletter

Sunday, 29 March 2020

Sunday Worship: 29 March 2020

Resources will be available on the website

bathurstunitingchurch.com.au

Including a printed liturgy and video to download (or deliver in another format if you let us know what you need).

Staying Connected

Minister of the Word
Rev Claire Wright

For pastoral matters Sunday to Friday contact 63311306 (Manse) or 0490 678 593 or email rev.claire.wright@gmail.com

Coronavirus Response Team:

BUConnect@gmail.com

Pastoral Response Group and Welfare Response Group:

BUConnect@gmail.com

Newsletter

The Newsletter will continue to be sent out (and posted on the Website) weekly with updates and resources: please contact Ruth if you wish to be added to the e-mailing list, or to submit prayer requests or good news stories of how you are staying connected and active!

BUConnect@gmail.com

O breath of Life, come sweeping through us (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

Ezekiel has previously announced God's judgement, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, Jerusalem's fall – and now here we are: the people exiled, the Temple plundered, the Holy City destroyed... "The hand of the Lord... set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. The Lord led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. The Lord said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' "

Dry bones are a poetic image of physical and social and spiritual withering. But they are also the stark reality of a desolate ancient battlefield, the skeletons of the fallen bleaching in the sun. There is no coming back from this. No pulse. No hope.

'Can these bones live?' The answer from the parched and defeated place of abandonment is, of course, 'no'. Even the prophet cannot muster the faith to say 'yes': only 'O Lord GOD, you know.' It is a poignant acknowledgement of utter human powerlessness. But also of divine possibility. Of divine faithfulness. Of hope.

It is all too obvious what dry bones – what 'hopeless situations' – confront us today, in the face of which all our knowledge and resourcefulness seem inadequate. But remember: God knows. God *knows*...

And suddenly, there is a *ruach* – a wind, or breath, or Spirit – swirling amid the rubble. "Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath – wind – spirit – to enter you, and you shall live... And the breath came into them, and they lived..." It is the same breath that once gave life to dust in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:7). The same wind that once parted the waters to bring the exiles home (Exod 14:21). The same Spirit that will stir the sand, playfully, at the mouth of an empty tomb...

Therefore, take heart. God *knows*. Resurrection happens. Hope holds.

[*This reflection is adapted, with permission, from Claire's contribution to this week's With Love to the World – written eight months ago... 'God knows', indeed...*]

This week, we read together:

- Ezekiel 37:1-4
- Psalm 130
- John 11:1-45

Prayer matters

Let's pray together this week :

- For those living in fear of coronavirus – and those actually affected (by illness or quarantine) or especially at risk
- For our Synod, Church Council, Elders and Coronavirus Response Team, and all those making difficult decisions in trying times
- For the teams working on offering us new ways to offer pastoral care, worship and community welfare in the face of coronavirus
- For all in Aged Care facilities, and their loved ones
- For health-care and retail workers suffering abuse and stress as they seek to help people
- For each other and for your neighbour – whether known to you or unknown

Remember to email BUCconnect or call Rev. Claire if you'd like to pray with someone.

Thanks and appreciation

Thank you to Church Council, Elders, Pastoral Partners, Allan (website), Tim and Janet (database) and everyone who is supporting the Coronavirus Response Plan with grace, hard work and love.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

The latest information we have (and links to reputable sources such as NSW Health and WHO) will be on the website bathurstunitingchurch.com.au.

WARNING: Please note that scammers are taking advantage of the current situation, seeking to gain information such as passwords and banking details. DO NOT OPEN any text message or email from an unknown source (or a fake sources such as 'GOV') claiming to offer COVID-19 testing or information, and asking you to click on a link. Delete immediately

Maintaining our offerings

Even though we won't be physically attending worship, please remember that we rely heavily on your generosity in making regular financial offerings, to enable us to continue to minister to you, and our networks and neighbours - *especially* in a time of widespread distress.

Thank you to everyone who has responded to depositing their offerings by direct debit or internet transfer to the Bathurst City – Giving Direct account

We have become aware that some would prefer not to use the internet, and instead deposit cash directly to the bank account.

This can be done by calling into any branch of the Westpac Bank and depositing to

BSB: 634634

Account No: 100027964

Account Name: Bathurst City – Giving Direct

Internet transfers can also be processed to this account, or alternatively contact the Treasurer at BUCconnect@gmail.com to obtain a Direct Debit form to send to Uniting Financial Services

STORIES OF HOPE

Good News Story of the Week:

The young couple moved into their new home (in Bathurst). They soon found that their neighbour was an elderly widowed gentleman living alone. This week the young lady, baby in pram, arrived at his door saying "Here is a little something for you."

To his surprise, delight and amusement he found it was a bag containing two rolls of toilet paper!

Dates for your Diary

Please remember: all 'in-person' events and groups have been suspended until further notice. If you'd like help to move your group on-line, please let us know at BUCconnect@gmail.com

Most previously advertised **events** (including the Tim Costello talk, Cards night and Adult Fellowship Gathering in Molong) have been cancelled.