



Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter Sunday, 31 May 2020

Physical Distance – Social Connection – Community Care

Sunday Worship: 31 May 2020

Resources for this Sunday's worship will be available by Sunday morning on the website bathurstunitingchurch.com.au including a printed liturgy and video to download.

The video package will also include Rev. Claire Wright's service of Closure of Ministry. Warmest thanks to Dr Denise Wood (Presbytery Chair) and Rev. Peter Harvey (Presbytery Minister) for their 'virtual' presence and participation



Staying Connected

For pastoral support, please contact your Pastoral Partner, or one of the Elders, or email BUConnect@gmail.com and we'll put you in touch with someone.

31 May 2020

Pentecost

'Jesus said to them: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit".' (John 20: 21-22)

There's so much in these two short verses – depicting, as they do, Jesus' farewell to his beloved disciples – that ring gloriously, painfully true for me this weekend, as I come to the close of my three-and-a-half years' ministry here in Bathurst. I wouldn't dream of breathing anywhere near any of you, just at the moment, of course...

But I'd love to offer the same words of parting encouragement and challenge that Jesus does. As God called me to minister with you to the communities of Bathurst and Perthville, so you, dear friends, are called to continue that work – to take up the torch, the story, the passion, the mission. If Pentecost is about anything, it's about the flame passing from the One to the many; the call of the church to be the Church. I want to affirm, as Christ was doing, that God never leaves Godself without a witness; that you are called; that you are enough; that together, you have everything you need to be God's faithful people.

And I'd hope to be able to leave you with a parting gift, as Jesus does. 'Receive the Holy Spirit'... Of course, that's a hard act to follow – and I hope you know that the Holy Spirit is already yours, now and always, working alongside you, and within you, and through you ... But I hope I can leave you something. The memory of a song, perhaps. The echo of a cry – 'That was unexpected!'. Permission to laugh in church, and cry, and dream...

I hope so. Because you've given me so many gifts, over these years together. We've learned and grown in ministry and mission together. You've helped me become a 'country girl' – probably for life. Thank you. In the words of the 'Clare Benediction' (by John Rutter):

May the Lord shower mercy upon you;
May the light of God's presence be your guide;
May God guard you and uphold you;
May the Spirit be ever by your side.

May God bless all your loved ones and cherish them;
Every friend, every stranger at your door:
In the name of God's Son our Saviour Christ
May God bless you now and evermore.

Rev. Claire

This week, we read together:

- Acts 2:1-21 ('All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit')
- Psalm 104: 24-24, 35b ('Send forth your spirit... and renew the face of the earth')
- 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13 (To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good)
- John 20: 19-23 ('Jesus breathed on them and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit')

VIRTUAL MORNING TEA

We meet for Virtual Morning Tea (via Zoom) every **Sunday morning at 11.00am**: everyone welcome to join us! Simply click on this link:

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/98096879145>

or enter the meeting ID 980-9687-9145 in the app.

You are particularly encouraged to join us this Sunday to say a 'virtual' farewell to Rev. Claire.

You are also encouraged to wear something red for Pentecost.

OPENING OF THE SHELTER CAFÉ

The Shelter Café opened last Saturday and Sunday and had a small number of guests. This surprised us as it usually takes some time for word to get around.

We hope to provide a warm space, good food and friendly faces for those who wish to come and have a meal. We will also have clean clothes and very warm sleeping bags available for those sleeping rough.

The Café will be open from 12-2pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

While we are targeting those who are sleeping rough we will not be turning away anyone who comes for a meal.

If you would like to volunteer to help at the Café please contact unitingsafeshelter@gmail.com

'Sunday at 5' on Zoom

Our informal evening 'Sunday @ 5' service meets via Zoom at 5.00pm each Sunday evening. If you'd like to join us, click on this link <https://zoom.us/j/640626609> or enter the Meeting ID 640 626 609 in the Zoom app.

All welcome!

Photo competition: 'What sustains me?'

Over the past few weeks, I've invited you all to take a photo that captures for you the theme of our Assembly leaders' reflections: 'What Sustains Me?'

What has been *sustaining* you – or your faith – during this difficult time?



David McLeod shared this wide-open-sky photo of his morning bike ride – together with a caption in Spanish (because the other thing that sustains him is *learning*, in this case, a new language):

'Cada mañana se renuevan sus bondades; ¡muy grande es su fidelidad!' ('The mercies of the Lord are new every morning: great is God's faithfulness!' *Lamentations 3: 23*)



I also received these lovely photos from Nancy Axe of Gosford, who has been enjoying our worship on-line over the last few weeks.

'The kookaburras and other native birds who come to be fed each day,' she writes. 'For them, nothing has changed in this time of lockdown.'



'My cat also relies on me for food, warmth (lying on the video player) and for a daily walk on his lead. This is what sustains me – and also my faith in God.'

I'm delighted you've felt sufficiently part of our church family to share this with us, Nancy: thank you!

So thank you to all who have entered my little Photo Competition. The winner is.....

.... all of you! (Seriously, I can't decide.) Your prizes will be winging their way to you in the next few days.

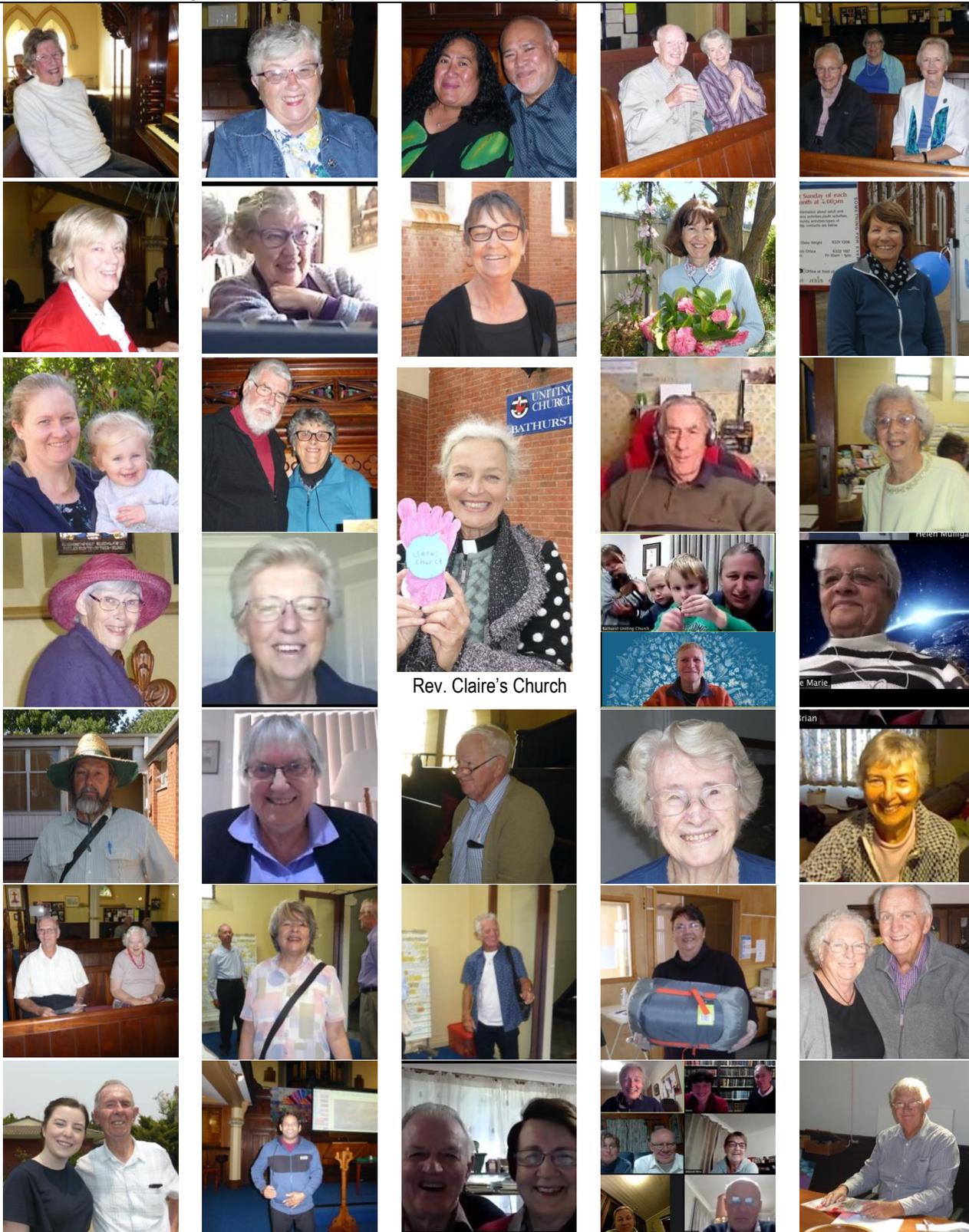
This one came directly to the newsletter from Judy Tyson.



The gold of God's autumn glory sustains me. Creation is always changing and adapting. It has recently survived dust storms, drought, fire, heatwaves and frost. How great thou art Lord.....if your creation can survive, adapt and thrive, so can I. Judy



Thankyou Rev. Claire for all you have done for each of us at Bathurst Uniting Church over the past 3 years. A few of your grateful congregation are pictured. We all will be praying for you as you begin your new ministry. We will miss you.



Rev. Claire's Church

Dates for your Diary

Please note that – despite the NSW Government’s easing of restrictions – all ‘in-person’ events and groups of our Church *continue to be suspended* until further notice, following guidance from Presbytery and Synod. Our priority is not ‘resuming activity’, but ensuring the safety and well-being of our church family and community. (See the full-page *Notice: Update on Gatherings* on the website for more details.)

Photos for the Bathurst Uniting Church webpage, social media and newsletter

If you are happy for photos of you to be included on the Bathurst Uniting Church webpage, social media and in the newsletter, please email YES to BUConnect@gmail.com. Most of the photos have been taken by Sharynne and she will only include ones where you look good!

The Newsletter

The Newsletter will continue to be sent out (and posted on the Website) weekly with updates and resources.

Please contact Ruth at BUConnect@gmail.com 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!

Prayer Matters

We pray together:

- For wisdom and care in our communities as the country ‘opens up’
- For our Shelter Café, its volunteers and guests
- For our lay leaders as they prepare for Rev. Claire’s departure
- For Rev. Claire as she prepares for her next adventure in ministry
- For each other and for your neighbour – whether known to you or unknown

Remember to contact your Pastoral Partner or one of the Elders if you’d like to pray with someone – or contact BUConnect@gmail.com

‘What’s good about it?’

The Coronavirus Report Team has compiled a report for Church Council about the *good things* that have arisen from the current situation – the lessons learned, the tools developed, the spirit adopted, the good habits embedded – that we’d like to see *carry on* (at least in some form) after the current crisis has ended.

If you have seen or experienced things you have really *liked* or *valued* about this difficult time, we’d love to know. What Good Things from this time would you like to see us maintain as part of the ‘New Normal’ – that might get lost if we just slip back into the ‘Old Normal’?

Email BUConnect@gmail.com with your responses, and we’ll build them into our report

‘With glad and generous hearts’ (Acts 2:46)

Even though we aren’t 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.

Money can be deposited 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. Alternatively contact BUConnect@gmail.com to obtain a Direct Debit form to send to Uniting Financial Services