



Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter Sunday 31 January 2021

Physical Distance - Social Connection - Community Care

Family Worship at 9.30am

'Sunday @ 6'

At 6pm – contemporary, informal, all ages worship in the Activities Hall with Covid Safe conditions.

After a summer break the service will be on this Sunday, 31 January.

Everyone is welcome and we hope to see you there.

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.

If you have items for the Newsletter please send them to Ruth or to BUConnect@gmail.com by 9pm Wednesday.

Welcome to 2021!



The holiday season is over, school has re-started and hopefully everyone has had a good break. Now is the time our regular groups and activities begin for the year. Hopefully most will be able to run this year as they have in the past with some adjustments.

There are still some restrictions for worship including the need to sign in. We are trying to help everyone sign in with the Service NSW app. We will sign them in if they don't have a phone and Julie is happy to help people get it set up on their phone so please ask!

LECTIONARY READINGS

Deuteronomy 18:15-20: Moses promises that God will raise up a prophet for Israel like him, but warns that the people will be held accountable for whether they listen to that prophet.

Psalm 111: A song in praise of God's deeds, God's care and provision for God's people, and celebrating how the fear of God brings wisdom.

1 Corinthians 8:1-13: Though idols are nothing, if eating meat sacrificed to an idol causes a brother or sister to stumble, we should rather not eat. Rather than knowledge, which creates pride, we should seek love, which builds up.

Mark 1:21-28: As Jesus teaches in the synagogue in Capernaum, the people are amazed at him. When he casts out a demon, they are staggered and the news about him spreads throughout the entire region.

REFLECTION :

A prophet like Moses – this became a dream for the people of Israel, and may be why they asked John the Baptist if he was "the prophet". As Epiphany gives us yet another perspective in Jesus, and the glory of God that he revealed, we discover that he is not just a prophet like Moses, but far more than that. If all the people wanted was a prophet like Moses, they were setting their sights too low. In the Gospel reading we are shown that this Jesus had an authority in his teaching that went beyond that of the religious leaders, and, by implication, even beyond Moses. Then, in his power to heal the demonised man, Jesus reveals his divine authority. Truly, as the Psalm sings, God has honoured God's promises, God has cared for God's people, and God has offered us one whose teaching gives wisdom and life.

It can be tempting to take this uniqueness of Christ and use it for our own glory, as if we are somehow better than others because of our association with Christ. This, more than just the little issue of food, was Paul's concern in the letter to the Corinthians. On the one hand he affirms that Christ is supreme – that demons and idols are nothing, and so eating food sacrificed to idols means nothing and should not be a concern. But, on the other hand, he points out that we cannot use our knowledge of Christ as a cause for pride, or as a reason to be unconcerned for the struggles of others. The glory of God that is revealed in Christ is authoritative and powerful, yes, but it is the power to serve and the authority to liberate. This week, then, the Lectionary calls us to recognise, in awe and wonder, the amazing, liberating power of Christ, and to be empowered by Christ to serve and liberate others in whatever weakness, struggle or bondage they may find themselves.

Application to Life

In every family, every neighbourhood and every church there are inevitable power struggles. We hold our convictions dearly, and we want others to see things as we do and to honour our view. In addition, we grow fearful that the views and needs and power of others may rob us of things we hold dear. Somehow we have come to believe that sharing power diminishes it, when, in fact, it does the opposite. Even in what we have come to call “spiritual warfare” – our “fight” against evil – we have framed the scene in terms of “power over” – Jesus proving “stronger” than demons. Yet, when we put Jesus' teaching, and this story of healing, in the context of Jesus' life, we discover that for Jesus fighting evil required a cross, not a sword, and drove him to service and sacrifice, not violence or conquest. What this means is that we are called, firstly, to embrace and experience Jesus' liberation for ourselves – the release of those things that would bind us, which almost always stem from our fear or self-interest – and then to engage with others as Christ did, sharing power, serving and liberating. This may mean learning, as parents, to collaborate with our children on their own values and ways of discipline. It may mean, as spouses, learning the art of collaboration in everything from finances to sex. It may mean as leaders of churches or groups learning to free others to find their own leadership, and serving them in the process, without fearing the loss of our own power or prestige. It may mean, as Paul teaches, releasing our own “rights” and “freedoms” in order to ensure that we do not cause others to stumble. It may mean working alongside those we may disagree with if it will help to bring justice or grace to people in our community. If we long for God's glory and authority to be seen in us, it certainly won't happen if we constantly strive for things to be done “our” way or if we constantly fight for control. Rather, when we embody Christ's liberating grace, that is when the glory and authority of Jesus is most clearly seen in us. John van de Laar <https://sacredise.com/>

THE NEXT EDITION OF WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD WILL ARRIVE SHORTLY AND WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN EARLY FEBRUARY.

CHANGES TO THE NEWSLETTER

From March the newsletter will change to being monthly – being circulated on the first Sunday of the month. It will be sent out by email and there will be printed copies in the church foyer. It will also be available on the church website.

Last year we were able to include items about people, activities that had taken place and lots of photos as well as the usual notices of coming events and church business. Hopefully we can continue that this year as it really helps to keep us all connected. I will need everyone's help to make it work! If there is an activity – take some photos (making sure that you have permission for them to be published from anyone in them, especially children) and send them to me.

Ruth

CHURCH COUNCIL/ELDER NOMINATIONS FOR 2021

The closing date to nominate people who may wish to be members of Church Council commencing March 2021 is **next Sunday, 7th February**.

We ask you to prayerfully consider those members of our congregation who have gifts of ministry that can assist our church fulfil its responsibilities in ministry and mission. Nomination forms will be made available in the church office/foyer/

Those nominated can choose to be designated as an Elder or Church Councillor.
Those nominated can selected to serve for 1 to 5 years

The Congregation has resolved that the Church Council consist of 12 elected members. As there are 10 members whose terms continue beyond the end of 2020, there are 3 vacancies to be filled.

Eight members of the current Council (listed below) will complete their nominated term later this year. They are eligible for re-election if they so desire.

Elders – Lynne Collett, Barbara Webb

Councillors – Tim Collett, Julie Greig, John Hoye, Max McKay, Peter Sackett, Robyn Wray

Nominations close on Sunday 7th February 2021, with the election of Elders and Church Councillors to take place on Sunday 28th February 2021. A candidate will require at least a majority of votes to be elected. All nominees are required to be either a Confirmed Member or Member-in- Association.

If you have any questions about the role of a Church Council member, please speak to Brian Mowbray or Lilian Beauchamp. 'What does it mean to be a Member of Church Council or Elder' sheets are available in the foyer.

Those whose term is continuing are:

Elders: Lilian Beauchamp, Ellie Mowbray, Judy Tyson

Councillors: Betty Cowan, Janet Drengenber, Deb Mina, Brian Mowbray, Marion Perry, Kaye Price.

HOW YOU CAN DEPOSIT MONEY

The Finance Committee have been addressing the changes needed for the cessation of the Westpac Agency agreement with UFS and have arranged for the following:

If any congregation members wish to deposit cash and/or cheques for offerings, donations and miscellaneous items they can attend any branch of the Reliance or Unity Bank and deposit the funds to

Account no: 100140356 Account Name: Council of Elders

These deposits will remain anonymous

All electronic transactions such as EFT, Direct Debits etc will remain the same, and there is no action needed to be taken with any electronic transactions that are now in place.

Internet transfers can still be made to

BSB: 634634

Account No: 100027964

Account Name: Bathurst City – Giving Direct