



Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter

August 2022

Worship Services

9.30am on Sundays in the church.

7 August Rev Keith Hamilton
Holy Communion

14 August Rev Keith
Hamilton Baptism

21 August rev Keith Hamilton

28 August Rev Keith
Hamilton

You can join worship on
Zoom by going to
<http://www.bathurstunitingchurch.com.au/> and pressing
the purple button.

'Sunday @ 5'

At 5pm – contemporary,
informal, all ages worship in
the Activities Hall. All are
welcome.

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.

You can also contact our minister,
Rev Keith Hamilton on
0417487446 or email
keith.hamilton.bathurstuc@gmail.com

Tolerance and hospitality

We often hear public figures speak of the need for tolerance. We hear the call to be tolerant to our neighbours, particularly neighbours who are different. Sometimes parents will tell their children to be tolerant of others. Organisational leaders, church leaders, will join the call to be tolerant of one another, particularly in times of division. The reverse is also used when a leader or organisation will declare that it will not tolerate certain behaviour, or attitudes, though the use of tolerance here seems to have a different meaning to the call to be tolerant. Tolerance often includes the call to respect the other.

Underpinning the idea of tolerance might be a desire not to have conflict, or to manage differences, a desire to recognise the autonomy of the individual. Such thinking aligns with the idea of individualism, and relativism. Everyone is 'free' to hold their own views. Even in the church, there are often calls to tolerate differences as a way to 'get along' with the other.

But is tolerance Christian? How does tolerance sit with "love your enemies, do good to them" (Luke 6:35). Is not tolerance at odds with "love one another, because love is of God" (1 John 4:16). Jesus of John's Gospel seems to be saying something different to tolerance when he gives a New Commandment, and says, "By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another (John 13: 35). The commandment does not seem to work with "be tolerant to one another." Nor John's prayer of Jesus in chapter 17 where the call is to Christian unity of the same order as the unity of the Father with the Son (John 17:21). There is something here that goes way beyond tolerance. Indeed, a careful read of the life of Jesus in the four gospels suggests he never spoke of tolerance nor practiced tolerance at all.

Jesus spoke and practiced hospitality (Matthew 25:31-46). He was not the first. The Hebrew people were commanded to welcome the sojourner, the alien and the stranger in their midst (Proverbs 5:10, Leviticus 19: 33-3, Leviticus 25:35, Exodus 23:9, Job 31:32, Ezekiel 47:22-23). Jesus was not the last one in the Bible to speak of hospitality (Romans 15:7; 1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 13:1-2).

A problem with the call to tolerance is that it leaves us disconnected. We can tolerate each other without engaging with the other. Tolerance does not create community; it divides community into factions. Political parties may have factions, but political parties never claim to be community – except by

(now) former Prime Ministers who speak of their party as a “broad church.” Churches often have factions, which goes against the very nature of the church as a “community of faith,” or a “fellowship of reconciliation,” or the “body of Christ.”

The challenge is how do we deal with differences in the church in a creative way that does not lead to factions and division, to insiders and outsiders, to people splitting off to either start another church or join another church? I heard Rev Tim Costello in response to a then Prime Minister speaking of the need for tolerance, say what we need is not tolerance but curiosity. He spoke of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) who did not tolerate the destitute beside the road, but displayed curiosity in engaging as the first step of giving overwhelming and extravagant hospitality.

Likewise, the ‘Father’ in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), did not express tolerance when the wayward son returned. He displayed extravagant hospitality and generosity. He did not ‘tolerate’ the elder brother’s petulant acts of exclusion; he went out to invite him in.

How might we be hospitable rather than tolerant to opposing views in the church, or family, or the wider community? Clearly there is no integrity in agreeing with a view with which we disagree. Agreeing to disagree may have a place, but often seems no more than a sophisticated tolerance.

The use of appreciative enquiry might be a way to show hospitality to others, even others in our congregation, or small group, as well as family and wider community. Habit five of Steven R. Covey’s *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, following habit 4 of work for a win/win, is “Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood”. Steven R Covey probably got that idea from the *Prayer of St Francis*, that bids God assist the petitioner to “seek to understand before being understood.” It is related to the ‘Golden Rule’ that we should “do to others as you would wish them do to you” (Matthew 7: 12, Luke 6: 31).

The Uniting Church’s Manual for Meetings expresses something of this idea of both hospitality and seeking to understand before expressing an opinion. When a new proposal is presented, before proceeding to decision-making, the first step is to clarify what is being proposed, and ensure that everyone understands what it is about. Then the opportunity arises to question and clarify before deliberating and exploring different views. Not until all are clear on what the proposal means does the meeting move to the next step and to decision-making. In other words, if the first response is “I don’t like that,” or “no, I won’t support that,” people have not shown hospitality to the proposer and to the rest of the members of the meeting by seeking to understand the matter first, before expressing an opinion.

Over two weeks, Sunday 7 and Sunday 13 August, 12:30-1:30 pm, at our church in William Street Bathurst, there is an opportunity to think and discuss some more of the idea of tolerance verse hospitality in the context of the *Five Practices of Fruitful Living/ Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. The discussion will be based upon an adaption of the work of Robert Schnase, in his books of the same name. Each practice is grounded in a Bible verse.

Blessings

Keith Hamilton
4 August 2022

On Sundays 11 and 25 September, at 11:30-12:30 there will be a Bible study discussion on the theme of creation. The discussion will be held at our Uniting Church, 140 William Street Bathurst.

Congregational Meeting

A Congregational Meeting will be held immediately following the morning Service on Sunday 21st August.

At this Meeting a draft budget for 2022/2023 will be presented, and there will be an opportunity to consider ways forward for the future.

Everyone is strongly encouraged to attend this meeting.

After the meeting there will be a soup lunch.

There will be soup, bread rolls and slices

There will be no cost for the lunch and all are welcome.

If anyone could help by making some soup or a slice please contact Deb Mina.



On Monday, August 15, Church Council, will hold their monthly meeting

The focus of this meeting will be to review the church finances for the coming 5 years, due to the current budget forecast for the 2022-2023 year.

Interested people are invited to attend. The meeting will commence at 7.00pm

Sunday @ 5 is an informal service in the hall which includes opportunities for discussion and sharing along with contemporary music. The numbers attending each week are relatively small but recently have increased considerably. Two weeks ago the service was followed by a wonderful dinner at Julie's new home.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOE BOXES

The shoe boxes the KUCA kids packed in the park last year were too late to be taken to Sydney so they have been stored for this year. Because of lockdowns people were not asked whether they would like to donate \$10 to help with the costs of transport.

If you would like to donate, please see Sandra or Email johnandsandra253@bigipond.com.au

SCARVES, BEANIES AND GLOVES AT CSU

Sunday week ago, the Knitter, Knotters & Knatterers group heard about the plight of Uni students at CSU struggling with the cold here in Bathurst and decided that it would be a great idea to attend the Uni and give out some scarves, beanies and gloves that had been knitted and donated.



Sharyne Mcleod and myself went to the Uni on Wednesday morning with around 100 items, being very unsure about what the morning would bring.

To our amazement and utter joy, we arrived about 10 to 11.00 am. The event had been advertised to commence at 11.00. We started to place the scarves, beanies and mittens out at 5 to 11.00am. By 11.01am all the items had been claimed by students. They were over the moon with joy.



Many of the students were nursing students from overseas, like Nepal and Nigeria, had only been in Bathurst for a very short time, and were struggling with the cold. They asked many questions about who had knitted the scarves and why.

We were able to share that they had been knitted or donated with love for those in need by members of the Bathurst Uniting Church Congregation and some from the wider Bathurst Community.

What was evident was the need for more scarves, beanies and gloves to be distributed, as many students arrived just after 11.00 looking for items to keep them warm and were extremely disappointed, and asked if there would be more available in the future.

It was an amazing privilege and honour to be part of this mission sharing the love of Jesus, and our congregation with the students.

Deb



The church Welfare group has available supermarket gift cards for people who are experiencing hardship. If you know of someone in the community who is in need of some help, or indeed, if you are in need, please contact Ellie, Lynne or Robyn for this assistance.



BUSS News

Homelessness Week has just ended which seems like a good time to reflect on what our church is doing in this area.

BUSS initially began in 2018 to provide emergency shelter for homeless men but due to Covid and other restrictions we were unable to continue the shelter so we have expanded to provide a broader range of supports for a variety of people who are doing it tough.

We now provide hot meals for free in the café at weekends (when there is nowhere else open in town) and the numbers attending continue to grow. For people who are homeless we make the bathroom available for them to shower and we provide tents, sleeping bags and warm clothes as needed.

BUSS also provides support for people with drug and alcohol issues by running a breakfast barbecue at the methadone clinic in summer and providing space and facilities for a support group to meet and have a lunch together.

Other programs include a social support group, a group for those who have been in prison, work parties to Perthville Cemetery in warmer months and pastoral support.

We are working on plans to run cooking sessions, literacy and financial education.

We would not be able to do any of this without our congregation's support and the many supporters and volunteers we have in the Bathurst community.

BUSS has been selected as a beneficiary for Bernardi's Building Better Communities Program. Shop at Bernardi's and collect a token from the registers to vote for us to be granted a donation of up to \$2500.

BUSS was recently the beneficiary of one of Moodies Pharmacy sausage sizzles. As well as a financial boost it was a chance to talk with people about our various projects.

Bernardi's
BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES
Program

We've been selected to be part of Bernardi's Building Better Communities Program!

Shop instore at Bernardi's & ask for a token at the checkout to vote for us & we will receive a share of \$5,000 in donations.

The more votes we get, the bigger the donation we receive!

 Bernardi's
MARKETPLACE
TOKEN



[BERNARDIS.NET.AU/COMMUNITY](https://bernardis.net.au/community)



**Electric vehicles - are they a viable option? An on-line forum
organised by Uniting Climate**

**Wondering about EVs? Come and hear about the benefits, costs, choice and availability
of electric vehicles in Australia**

**Wednesday, 7 September 2022 at 7:00 pm
To be held on Zoom. Get tickets from Eventbrite
[eventbrite.com.au](https://www.eventbrite.com.au)**

Mowing Roster August – Peter

How to get information/stories out there

**For good news stories, upcoming events or updates to be added to the church website
email Allan - allanwray@hotmail.com**

If you have items for the Newsletter please send them to Ruth at revaughan@bigpond.com by
9pm on the last Wednesday before the first Sunday of the month.