



Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter

October 2023

Reflection

"I'll be watching you"

The following statement is often attributed to St Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary." It is doubtful if St Francis of Assisi ever said that epithet, but it has a use. Sometimes it is used as an excuse not to speak about faith in Jesus Christ. "I am not very good with words," someone will say. Except when it comes to talking about their recent holiday, or latest grandchild, niece, nephew, favourite hobby. Then they can speak. At length. With great enthusiasm. It is important that we can speak. In 1 Peter 3:13, the writer encourages the reader to "Always be ready to give an account of the hope that is with in you." Good words. The statement also speaks to the need for actions. James (2:14-26) said, "Faith without works is dead." James continues and implies that one cannot have faith without works, it is not an either or situation in which one person has faith and another has works but rather faith informs works. And works are to be consistent with faith.

There is a sense in which we do preach the gospel at all times, even when we are unaware. But which gospel are we preaching? Let us consider that question.

We observe other people all the time. I think that is part of being human.

When I was growing up, we knew what time people went to work each day. We would see the neighbours leave for a bus the same time every day. Or drive out of their driveway. We recognised the cars going to work and coming home. Students who went to school left home at the same time each day, some going one direction to the primary school, others going another direction to High School. In the afternoon, we could see them coming home. Bonds Spinning Mill was at the top of our street, and we would see the change of shift. We got to recognise the cars. Same cars every day in the morning, and again in the afternoon. Come Sunday we knew who went to church, and when. The local Baptist church used to send a bus around the suburb picking up children going to Sunday School. People in the street knew who got on the bus.

For the first 14 years of my life, my family walked to the local Methodist church. At one time, gathering up other children who would walk with us to Sunday School. I can recall walking with my brother, behind our dad, wearing galoshes, raincoat and hat on our way to church. People in the street knew my family went to church. They saw us leave each Sunday wearing our Sunday best and saw us return some hours later. They knew without me saying a thing. When as a young adult I went to the local leagues club one night, the father of one person in the street, reminded me that my family went to church. It wasn't so much that I should not go to the club, but how I might behave at the club was observed by others. Fortunately, I did not let their expectations down. The thing that struck me at the time and has stayed with me is that people are observing.

Worship Services

9.30am in the church.

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

8 October Brian

15 October Rev Keith Hamilton

22 October Rev Keith Hamilton

29 October Rev Keith Hamilton

5 November Communion

'Sunday @ 5'

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

NOTE The 5pm service time is not being changed for daylight saving for now.

People along the route to church knew we went to church just by our actions. They also saw our demeanour. Of course, we do need to use words. Going to church is a witness, and what it means requires words of explanation. But that is not my point here. People know if we go to church. And they know if we stop attending, or if we have a day off. They are also watching to see if our other behaviours are consistent with the way they thought church going people live. They were watching to see if going to church made a difference in a person's life. Is it real, or just something one does? The memories remind me of our witness. Even today, people are watching.

A police officer might be off duty, but they still observe what is happening in their neighbourhood. A mechanic doesn't stop hearing the sounds of cars on their days off. A teacher of English will still notice the grammar and language even when on holidays. Can a Christian ever be off duty?

In a city like Bathurst, we are probably known by more people by sight than by name. People see us, as we see other people. At the supermarket. At the petrol station. The bus stop. The Post office. When we go to vote. In the crowd on ANZAC day. At the café. Driving down the street. So far so good. But what happens when we become irate over a parking spot, or a que taking longer than we plan? When we are at the annual NRL game in Bathurst, are we yelling at the referee, and what do we yell? What do we say on the Bathurst Our Town Facebook page, or letters to the Western Advocate? What about things around our church?

There is much truth in the statement, "we can run, but we can't hide." Is our behaviour consistent with the Christian witness we would wish to declare? Are we preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ with our behaviour, attitudes and actions?

When I visit churches, I like to observe the faces of people coming out of church. Grumpy or smiling? Officious? Consternation? Angry or joyful? Are people ready to shoulder a way past others to 'get ahead' or ready to assist the neighbour? Do people grumble out on the footpath before and/or after church? It is not so much about what worship was like as what the people are like. If worship shapes behaviour, which god or God have the people worshipped if coming out of church or going into church is with aggravation, shortness of temper, or good grace.

Often when we come out of church on a Sunday in Bathurst, there are people on the footpath or in Machattie Park, and many do look over at the church. And not only on a Sunday do people observe the comings and goings from our church. After all, it is in a prominent position. I wonder what people see? I hope it is people full of Christ and considerate of others.

Our life and words are like a kind of Bible to others. "Preach the gospel at all times, use words if necessary," contains considerable truth. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians (3:4-14) encouraged the church to let go of every encumbrance and to pursue Christ as he pursued Christ, even as Christ had hold of him, and them. Which gospel are we preaching?

Blessings

Keith Hamilton

Making up our Christian mind: Monday night 9 October, 7-8 pm on Bathurst UC zoom. We will discuss the theological drivers that might assist us that might assist us decide how we vote on the referendum.

Sunday @ 5

The congregation who gathered last Sunday evening decided to leave the service at 5pm for now rather than changing to 6pm during daylight saving.

Music BUSS Open Mike Night



On Wednesday 27 September, Music BUSS (an activity of Bathurst Uniting Support Services) held our first Open Mike night, in the activities hall. I say "our first" not because it was ever planned as a regular thing, but because by half time we were already talking about having a second. It was a great night for both the performers and the audience.

Performances included songs from Music BUSS themselves to open and close the evening, three other bands which had formed for the night consisting of Music BUSS members, our evening service band, and other acts by BUSS members and by members of the public who had seen the advertising, including a primary school age electric guitarist who showed some of us oldies how it should be done.

The event was possibly the first alcohol free Open Mike night ever held in Bathurst. Whether or not it was, they are not common, and there is an obvious demand for them.

We have no date yet for a second night but several people are already polishing up their acts, and the quality was impressive enough first time around. So watch this space. Andrew



BUSS Donations

Currently needed: new underpants, small size summer clothes, Books + DVD's.

UHT milk, coffee, sugar, laundry washing powder,

We don't Need: winter gear/clothes, bedding.

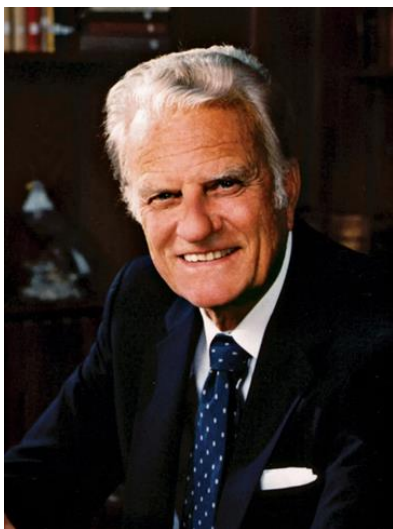
BUSS Volunteer Development Training

Have you ever thought about volunteering at the café or other BUSS activities?

There will be volunteer development training presented by Paula Cahill on **Sunday 22 October 2.30pm to 4.30pm** in the BUSS rooms

It will assist volunteers with skill development in listening and responding. The service acknowledges the challenge facing clients and volunteers who interact with different backgrounds and experiences. The session will be interactive and will explore personal values and skills, listening skills, self care and knowledge of BUSS procedures for escalation of issues.

RSVP by 19 October to buss2795@gmail.com



Tribute to Billy Graham

29th October 2023

2.30-3.30pm

Bathurst Uniting Church

By Donation – Money to go to Bathurst Christian Education Council

Afternoon Tea provided

Zoom link on the BUC Website

www.bathurstunitingchurch.com.au

There will be a table for memorabilia.

You are welcome to bring along anything you may have.

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

Mowing Roster

14 October Henry and James

28 October Peter

The newsletter email address is bathurstucanews@gmail.com. Please send items by 9pm on the last Wednesday of the month

Please send news or information for the website to allanwray@hotmail.com