



Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter

November 2023

Reflection

We are in the last month of the church year. The last month is bookended with All Saints Day on 1 November, and Christ the King on 26 November. Following the lectionary cycle, this is our last month with the gospel of Matthew, for three years. From Advent, which this year is 3 December, the lectionary (fully called the Revised Common Lectionary) will follow Mark through to the end of the church year in November 2024.

Mark is a much shorter gospel. It has 16 chapters, which compares with 21 for John, 24 for Luke and 28 for Matthew. Therefore, during the year of Mark, in the season of Easter, and for 6 weeks in about August, we will hear from John's gospel. A good Christian discipline could be to read the gospel right through. Mark can be read in about 2 hours in one sitting. That then helps in hearing the themes. Mark is written with a sense of urgency. It rushes along. The movement is probably a response to the imminent threats that were bearing down upon the fledgling Christian community in about 66 CE. It is written about the time that both Peter and Paul are martyred, and when the Romans came and partially destroyed Jerusalem.

Given what is happening in the world today, it could be a very good gospel to read at this time. It offers hope in a fearful time. I will be offering a one-night introduction to Mark on Monday night 27 November 2023, 7-8 pm on zoom. All Welcome.

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.

5 November Rev Keith Hamilton Holy Communion

12 November Rev Keith Hamilton

19 November Lynne

26 November Rev Keith Hamilton

3 December Rev Keith Hamilton
Communion

'Sunday @ 5'

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

I said above that we are in the last month of the church year. All Saints Day, 1 November, and All Souls Day, 2 November, are usually commemorated on either the last Sunday in October or the first Sunday in November. While both festivals have been commemorated in the church since about the fifth century, they are new to many protestants.

The Apostle Paul referred to believers in many of the early churches as the saints. That idea could be daunting. The communion of saints, both the living and the dead, only makes sense when we remember that Jesus Christ died and was buried with the dead and rose from the dead to be with the Father and those who also are raised to be with the Father. Secondly, it only makes sense when we remember that it is not dependent upon our works or whatever might be good in us, but on the holiness of Jesus Christ at work in us, and the Holy Spirit that "glues" us together as church both on earth and in heaven.

Our three antecedent traditions of Methodism, Presbyterianism and Congregationalism all encouraged their members to grow in holiness through the practice of daily prayers and scripture reading. The prayers

include confession of sins to God, and petitions to God asking help to “yield not to temptations” as the old Alexander song said, as well as prayers for other people. Growing in holiness is a growing in our dependence on and guidance from God, and God’s work in us. It was Luther who spoke of the priesthood of all believers, and so encouraged the people to devote time to seeking God’s grace and living lives “worthy of their high calling.”

Some churches continue the All Saints Day theme right through from All Saints Day to Advent. While Matthew does not use that language, it is certainly there in the gospel readings we shall hear in church over the next Sundays. The four gospel readings over these weeks are: Matthew 5:-12, 25:1-46. See also the second readings for these Sundays: 1 John 3:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-11; Ephesians 1:15-23.

The last Sunday of the Church year is called Christ the King. Sometimes it is known as the Reign of Christ. That Sunday reminds Christians that at the end of time, Christ will come again, and Christ will reign supreme. That reminder can encourage hope in difficult times. This is about eschatology – the last things. Sam Wells suggested that one way to think about eschatology is that it is the movement from existence to essence, the movement from earth to heaven.

The church believes, and it is expressed well in the *Basis of Union* (Paragraph 3) of the Uniting Church, that “the church lives between the time of Christ’s death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which he will bring.” It is in that context that the church is a pilgrim people on the way towards the promised goal. The promised goal is consummation of all things in Christ. Informed by the scriptures and inspired by the Holy Spirit, in many places people write for the importance of disciples of Jesus on the way to attend, keep focused upon, look out for Christ, who feeds the church with the Word and sacraments, and the Holy Spirit. That is look out for Jesus Christ to come to us through the reading of the scriptures and the preaching, and in the sacraments of Baptism and Lord’s Supper. And look out for, be open to, the gift of the Holy Spirit, who can guide and direct the church – all of us – that we may not lose the way.

The reign of Christ or Christ the King Sunday leads us into the season of advent and Christmas. So, each season of the yearly cycle of worship, witness and service leads us seamlessly on the pilgrimage of faith as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Blessings,
Keith Hamilton

Meetings of the congregation. Our congregation has two worship services each Sunday, 9:30 and 5 pm. Sometimes we refer to them as two congregations, which while not strictly accurate, is useful to assist us remember that we worship at two different times, and in two different places – the Church and the Activities Hall. This becomes important when we talk about holding a congregation meeting.

The Uniting Church regulations 3.5.1.C (i) say that there are to be at least two congregation meetings each year. Congregational meetings provide an opportunity for members and attenders to receive reports and updates on what is happening, and to engage in matters. At Bathurst UC an update of church council and also the Presbytery is made during the two services of worship, usually on the Sunday after the most recent meeting. Our six portfolio groups, which are sub-committees of church council, also bring regular reports to both our church council and our congregation during the two services of worship. During 2023 there have been several congregation consultations. However, a meeting enables people to ask questions and discuss matters. For that reason, the church council has decided to hold more congregation meetings to facilitate improved reporting to the congregation, and opportunities for discussion, questions and answers and decision-making. Therefore, there will be a meeting for **the congregation on Sunday 26 November at 11 am, followed by a bring and share lunch.** The lunch will start no later than 12 noon. All are welcome to attend.




White Rock Christmas CAROL Service

WHERE: White Rock Community Church
White Rock Road, Kelso

WHEN: Sunday 26th November, 2023

TIME: 6.00pm

SPEAKER: Rev. Rev. Keith Hamilton
Bathurst Uniting Church

Refreshments after service
Everyone welcome





GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

Wednesday 15 November, 6.00 for 6.30pm

at **Vanilla Bean**, 109 Bentinck Street.

Please contact Kaye or Maureen Blake by
Sunday 12 November if you wish to attend. In
fairness to the restaurant, bookings are essential.

COMING BUSS ACTIVITIES



**8th of November
@ 2:00pm in the
activities room.
140 William
Street, Bathurst**



**Free ideas for
cost effective/
budget
friendly
Christmas
gifts.**





**TRADITIONS OF
CHRISTMAS**

Come along and learn for **FREE** about
Christmas
decorations and what they mean.
Lots of opportunities to make your own
decorations to take home.
Share in morning tea.

*14th December
10.00 - 11.30 am
Activities hall
140 William Street, Bathurst*




BUSS UPDATE

Recently the BUSS activity diary has been very full. As well as all the usual activities there has been a cooking day to replenish the freezer for the café, The Chifley Opioid Clinic has started up for the Summer there was an interesting training session for volunteers and a wonderful afternoon tea to thank the volunteers and donors. At the afternoon tea Music BUSS played and the Activities Hall was alive with music and even some dancing.



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

11 November John & Max

25 November Brian

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