



Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter

December 2024

Reflection

On the lookout for a public Christ in postcode 2795



Clive Pearson wrote an intriguing article titled, "On the look-out for a Public Christ in the Australian Soul," *Uniting Church Studies*, Vol. 14, No.2, December 2008. I have been pondering Pearson's article in relation to Advent and Christmas. On the look-out for a Public Christ in Postcode 2795.

One of the benefits of the use of the word 'God' or spirituality, in the public discourse is that most people can join the discussion. God and spirituality can be generic. Both words are sufficiently inclusive to include most and sufficiently vague not to be too offensive. But which God and what spirituality are we talking about? Gregory Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, compellingly proposes that throughout the Bible there is a three-way choice for evil, idolatry or God. And whichever of the three we choose becomes our God. For Christians, sooner or later Christology – the divine humanity of Jesus Christ – must enter the discussion. Leslie Holden, *Jesus: A Question of Identity*, suggested that 'all talk of God, spirit, human life, and hope is Christian only so far as that talk has been shaped at some deep level by belief in about Jesus of Nazareth.'

Our God talk is shaped by our belief of who is Jesus Christ. God became incarnate. That is the big news this time of year. We in the church celebrate the incarnation of God in Jesus. That incarnation is connected to the later resurrection of Christ. Indeed, it is only that Christ is the risen crucified One that we have anything to celebrate at Christmas.

So what?

It means that there is no part of creation from which Christ is absent. Abraham Kuyper said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

That means Christians are not worshipping an idea, or a past event, or an undefined 'god' but a God who in the risen Christ is present in all the stuff of life. But how might we discern the presence of Christ? Deitrick Bonhoeffer spoke of the centrality of Christ, and the critical question; who is Jesus Christ, which might become who is Jesus Christ today? Public theologians take that question thoughtfully and consider that inside that question are two questions: 'Who do people say that I am,' and 'who is my neighbour?' Putting those two questions together, one from Mark and one from Luke's Gospels provides a way to undertake Christian public theology, and to, in Clive Pearson's phrase, be "On the look-out for a public Christ in the Australian soul." To be on the lookout for a public Christ in postcode 2795. Clive Marsh explores these matters in a practical way, in his book, *Christ in Practice*. He exchanges the question, 'who is Jesus Christ for us today?' with 'where is Christ to be found?' Where is Christ to be found raises questions about what will Christ look like in the midst of human life today? How can we recognise Christ? In what circumstances should we expect to find Christ?

Marsh then suggests that we will expect to find Christ today: 'wherever people suffer innocently or for a just cause; when solidarity is shown with those who are mistreated; wherever forgiveness occurs; when people experience a transformation in life; wherever people discover what they believe to be their true identity; whenever truth is told, however painful truth telling may prove; wherever the abuse of power is challenged; whenever creativity blossoms; whenever people renounce reliance on wealth; and at meal times. For Marsh this is not a list of laudable human actions' but rather a way of seeing, a way of paying attention, a way of interpreting life through a Christ-centred focus.

Jurgen Moltmann *The Way of Jesus Christ*, speaks of the therapeutic Christ. For the good news to be good news it must address those aspects of the human condition lived out in a particular time and place that require healing, restoration, forgiveness and salvific presence of Christ. Of necessity, faith must be rooted in the past and engage our here and now. The therapeutic Christ means that Christ confronts human misery - loneliness, lostness, despair, brokenness - bringing salvation, which is experienced as healing and wholeness. This is not 'pie in the sky when you die,' this is both personal and community, and it happens in the present.

Where do you see this therapeutic work of Christ in Bathurst? Where do you see the therapeutic work of Christ in your life? Where are you engaged in the therapeutic work of Christ?

Sometimes, often, our role as Christians is not only in the doing, it is most importantly in the identifying, helping others to see Christ at work in their life and in society. The celebration of the incarnation of Christ does involve a baby, and delightful stories, Christmas trees, a nativity, a manger, fine food, gift giving. They have a certain meaning, and they point beyond to the wonder of God who is incarnate in Christ. Yet if that 'beyond' is not identified, the day can be hollow and give rise to the domestic violence, homicides, high suicide rate and highest daily calls on Lifeline across the year. We ought not keep Christ a secret.

Our celebration is the richer and more meaningful when we live out the good news of the incarnation each day, on the look-out for a public Christ in postcode 2795. We might be mindful of these organising questions: Who do people say that I am? and, Who is my neighbour?

Keith Hamilton
11 November 2024

Advent and Christmas Services

Sunday 1 December 9.30am worship Holy Communion Rev Keith Hamilton

1st episode of an Australian Christmas Story: Do not be afraid.

Sunday 8 December 9.30 am worship Rev Keith Hamilton

2nd episode of an Australian Christmas Story : Be careful what you wish for.

Sunday 15 December 9.30am worship

KUCA Sunday – Kids of the Uniting Church lead the service

Sunday 22 December 9.30am worship Rev Keith Hamilton

3rd episode of an Australian Christmas Story: What do you get when you fall in love?



Sunday @5 will be on at 5pm in the Activities Hall on 1,8,15 and 22 December. It will then have a break until 2 February 2025, Holy Communion will be held on 1 December

Christmas Eve - Tuesday 24 December 5.30pm to 6.30pm

Carols in the Courtyard

Music BUSS and others will provide music. 4th episode of an Australian Christmas Story: It could have been here.

Please bring a chair and hat.

Christmas Day 25 December

9.30am Celebration

5th episode of an Australian Christmas story: Fireworks



Sunday 29 December 9.30am service

6th episode of an Australian Christmas story: Not just another day

Worship in January will be each Sunday at 9.30am

The 5pm worship will be in recess after 22 December and will restart on Sunday 2 February 2025.

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

Other Christmas activities

Friday 13 December 3.30pm to 5pm – Free Gingerbread House Making in the 1837 Hall

All are welcome!

Sunday 15 December 7 to 9pm Bathurst Community Carols by Candlelight in Machattie Park,



Sunday 15 December 12pm BUSS Christmas Barbecue lunch under the tree behind the church. This will also be a thank you celebration for all those who have volunteered or supported BUSS through 2024. The weekend café will then be closed until Saturday 11 January 2025.

Thursday 19 December 6pm to 7 pm

Carols in Kings Parade

Music provided by Music BUSS. Bring a chair or rug

Church Council Election

CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATIONS FOR 2025

Over the coming weeks, (up to Sunday 2nd February 2025), opportunity will be given to nominate people who may wish to be members of Church Council commencing March 2025.

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.

Those nominated can opt to serve for 1 to 5 years

The Congregation has resolved that the Church Council consist of 12 elected members. As there are 5 members whose terms continue beyond February 2024, there are 7 vacancies to be filled.

Six members of the current Council (listed below) will complete their nominated term in February 2025.

They are eligible for re-election if they so desire.

Lilian, Julie, Deb, Brian, Ellie, Marion

Nominations close on Sunday 2nd February 2025, with the election of Church Council Leaders to take place on Sunday 23rd February 2025. 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 either Brian or Lilian or an existing Church Council member.

There are information sheets with a nomination form attached to the email that comes with this newsletter or the sheets will be available at church from this Sunday.

SRE TEACHERS NEEDED

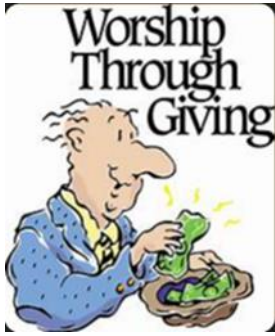
Do you love Jesus? Do you enjoy working with children? Would you like to learn more about your faith?

Why not consider becoming an SRE teacher in one of Bathurst's public schools?

This is a very rewarding ministry to be involved in. We use the CONNECT Program and children are supplied with their own activity books. All the training is provided and support is given.

Please talk to Keith or Ellie for more information.





Many Ways to Give:

There is now a Tap and Go facility in the church foyer where you can give to various options with your card.

To pay invoices issued, to donate to the work of the Church, donations to the Organ Fund, etc:

For electronic remittances only @ UFS:

BSB: 634634 **Account No:** 100019125

Account Name: Bathurst City - Working Account

Narration: Please indicate why the funds are for.

For cash or cheque deposits @ Reliance Bank

BSB: 882000 **Account No:** 300003447

Account Name: Bathurst Uniting Church

Narration: Please indicate what the funds are for by asking the teller to enter it into the Bank system.

For Giving Direct and Offertories:

Please see Deb Mina if you wish to set up a regular Direct Debit or Periodical Payment.

BSB: 634634 **Account No:** 100027964

Account Name: Bathurst City - Giving Direct

Narration: None is required as these deposits are completely anonymous

Bathurst Uniting Support Services (BUSS)

For the work of BUSS as a General Donation or for a Specific Program being run by BUSS

BSB: 634634 **Account No:** 100049962

Account Name: Bathurst City – BUSS

Narration: Please indicate what the funds are for, or if you wish to make an anonymous donation a narration is not required.

Mowing Roster

14 December Alan

4 January Henry & James

18 January Peter

1 February Brian & Brian

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

PLEASE NOTE

There will be no January newsletter. The next newsletter will be for Sunday 2nd February 2024.

As always, urgent matters will be emailed as needed. If you have something urgent please contact me. Ruth

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