



# Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter

March 2026

Come out to Perthville Community Hall to enjoy the  
Bathurst Uniting Community Retreat  
Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 9.00 for 9.30 – 3.00pm



Guest Presenter: Denise Wood Chairperson,  
Macquarie Darling Presbytery

Please add your name to the sign-up list in the  
Foyer or let Maree Wilsmore or Judy Tyson  
know by Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup> if you are coming  
as lunch will be provided.  
A share plate for morning tea, and a voluntary  
donation of \$5 to assist with costs, would be  
greatly appreciated.

## Worship Services

**9.30 am in the church**

**1 March** Rev Alan Robinson

**8 March**

**15 March** Rev Keith Hamilton Holy  
Communion and Covenant Service

**22 March** Rev Keith Hamilton

**29 March** Rev Keith Hamilton Palm  
Sunday

If you want to join on Zoom go to  
<https://www.bathurstunitingchurch.com.au/>  
and click on the purple button

**'Sunday @ 5'**

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

Music practice is at 4.30pm. If you play an  
instrument come along!

## 2026 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - NIGERIA

Time: 11am Friday 6 March

Location: Cathedral of St. Michael & St. John,  
Cnr. William & Keppel Streets Bathurst

Theme: I WILL GIVE YOU REST: COME..  
(MATTHEW 11: 28 - 30)

This year the focus country is Nigeria. 6.5 million  
internally displaced persons live in Nigeria,  
ranking second globally after Syria. 70% of  
internally displaced people in Nigeria live in  
overcrowded camps with inadequate access to  
basic facilities like food, water, sanitation, and  
medical care. Bible Society Australia is  
partnering with Bible Society Nigeria (BSN) to  
support internally displaced people and slum  
residents affected by violence and poverty. This  
project supplies relief materials, Bible-based  
Trauma Healing sessions, Bibles and school  
supplies. It aims to meet basic, emotional and  
spiritual needs.  
All Welcome!

## REFLECTION

### How do we know when we are being tempted?

Matthew 4:1-11

1 Then Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil. 2 And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 But Jesus answered saying, "It is written, 'People shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the Devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God throw yourself down for it is written, 'He will give his angels orders concerning you', and, 'on their hands they will carry you, so that your foot does not strike against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" 8 Again the Devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory 9 and said to him, "All these I will give to you if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him alone shall you serve.'" 11 Then the Devil left him, and suddenly the angels came and ministered to him."

Translation by Keith Hamilton

The first Sunday of Lent each year attends to the temptations of Jesus when in the wilderness. I have been meditating on two questions related to the temptations. The first is, how did Jesus know he was being tempted? We could quickly respond that he knew because he was the Son of God, but that answer raises more problems than it resolves. If Jesus was not really tempted, then we have a problem. It would suggest he was not fully human. That becomes a problem because if that is the answer, the cross and resurrection have no meaning for us. We remain cut-off from God. Of course, Jesus might have had an inkling he was being tempted by the wilderness surroundings. But the question remains, how did Jesus know he was being tempted. He was tempted again in the garden of Gethsemane on the night of his arrest. How did he know he was being tempted?

The question is real because the question is also ours. How do we know when we are being tempted?

There is a sociological theory called the Normalisation of Deviance. Normalisation deviance arose from an investigation of the space shuttle Challenger disaster in 1986. The first investigation found that the "O" ring on the right booster rocket failed, which allowed hot gasses to mix with fuel in the tank. The first investigation levelled blame at certain people. But a subsequent investigation examined the culture of the organisations concerned. It found that there had been a culture set from top managers that little by little redefined risk. Gradually certain things that were previously deemed as risky were normalised. They "got away" with things, and the more they "got away" with things the more those things became "normalised." But the new "normal" was a deviation from what was safe. Further studies have shown that many of the corporate failures occurred in organisations that had all the procedures and processes and rules in place but developed a culture that normalised deviating from that way. It is not an argument not to have procedures and policies in place— that in itself would be a normalisation of deviance.

Churches and Christians are not immune from the normalisation of deviance. This is where the practices of the faith that keep us on the way as Christians are deviated. We can "get away" without going to church every Sunday, without a prayer of confession, without knowing the traditions of the church expressed as the Apostles and Nicene Creed, without a broad reading of the scriptures, without daily prayers. But the new norm we create is a deviation from the norm of the Christian faith. We might not even know when we are being tempted. The temptation could be that we deviate further from the norm of the Christian faith until we are living on a distorted memory of the faith yet not knowing that what we have is a distortion.

Jesus knew his scriptures. He had studied them as a Jew and had been examined on them. The four gospels witness to us that Jesus read from the scriptures. So, he knew them sufficiently that when the devil misquoted scripture, Jesus knew it was a misquote. We could read something from the Bible every day and build up our knowledge of the scriptures.

Jesus knew the traditions of the faith. In his walk on earth there were several handbooks of the tradition that guided the people. Jesus knew them. Today our traditions include the Apostles and Nicene Creed. It is not too hard to learn them, and they can provide a useful scaffolding for our Christian life to keep us to the norms of the faith.

The New Testament witness shows that Jesus prayed daily. The Jews of his time prayed multiple times each day. The final temptation of Jesus is about worship. Jesus is tempted to worship the devil. How do we know when we are being tempted to worship something other than God? Jesus paraphrases the Shema. The Shema is the prayer said every morning and evening by Jews, even to this day. Jesus prayed this prayer every morning and every night. It comes from Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

<sup>4</sup>Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. <sup>5</sup>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup>Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. <sup>7</sup>Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. <sup>8</sup>Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, <sup>9</sup> and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Jesus demonstrates that worship of God must come first every day in every way. Because Jesus lived this way, he could recognise that what the devil was saying was a temptation, and he could deal with the temptation.

For Christians, a comparable prayer might be the prayer Jesus taught. It can be prayed first thing in the morning, again at lunch time and again in the evening. It does not take long. It could be prayed while on an early morning walk, over breakfast, in the car, over lunch, while getting ready for bed at night. It can keep Christians focussed on the important matters of the Christian life.

Keeping these daily religious practices, just like Jesus did, puts us in a position to be guided by the Holy Spirit when faced with a possible temptation. We can put ourselves in the best position to know when we are being tempted and respond faithfully. Ensuring that in addition to our weekly worship, that it has the elements of prayer including confession, bible readings from the breadth of the Bible, an affirmation of faith or creed that reminds us of the “basic’s is also our daily life practices.

Lent provides a six-week opportunity to examine our lives. Have we normalised in our life a deviation from the Christian life? Do we really know when we are being tempted to deviate from the way of Jesus? What do we need to change? What do we need to take up?

I close with a Lenten prayer used by many churches.

Blessings, Keith Hamilton

Almighty God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,  
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:  
give us grace to discipline ourselves  
in obedience to your Spirit;  
and, as you know our weakness,  
so may we know your power to save;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.



[Blue Mountains Musical Society](#) warmly invites your congregation to join us for a special charity performance of Stephen Schwartz's hit musical **Godspell** at the *Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre* on Saturday 2 May 2026.

This uplifting production, inspired by the Gospel according to Matthew, celebrates community, compassion, and the power of shared faith. It offers a joyful opportunity for church communities across the Mountains to come together while supporting a vital local service.

All profits from the event will go directly to the [Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains Community Legal Centre](#), helping provide free legal support to vulnerable individuals and families in our region. By attending, your church will be contributing to justice, dignity, and practical care for those who need it most.

**Event: Godspell - For Charity**

**Venue: Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre**

**Performance: 8pm, Saturday 2 May 2026**

**Tickets: \$39-49 available [online here](#) or at the BMEC Box Office.**

A DIFFERENT WAY  
CONCERT

a concert of new songs and hymns

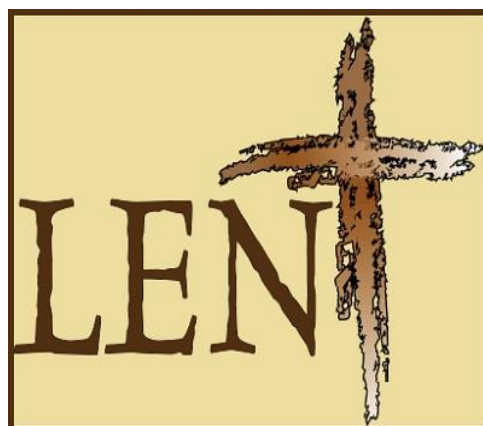
All Saints Cathedral Bathurst

Sunday 15th MARCH at 3pm

ALL WELCOME. Admission FREE

Music from the Christian musicals  
"A Different Way" and "Pilgrim Way"  
by Sybil Parker

For more information please contact  
Sybil Parker 0435 102 113 6368 5828  
Lauren Parker 0439 621 345



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**Mowing Roster**

**7 March**

Brian C

Brian P

**21 March**

Ian Browne

**Staying Connected**

For pastoral support, please contact your Pastoral Partner, or one of the Elders, or email [BUCCconnect@gmail.com](mailto:BUCCconnect@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](mailto:keith.hamilton.bathurstuc@gmail.com)

**PLEASE NOTE**

The newsletter email address is [bathurstucanews@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:allanwray@hotmail.com)