



Bathurst Uniting Church

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

Newsletter

May 2026

Reflection

The Holy Spirit and the Community of Christ

Even though every Sunday of the year is a 'little Easter,' the church season of Easter ends at Pentecost. Again, while one Sunday in the year attends to the person and work of the Holy Spirit, every Sunday's worship includes the theme of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes it can be confusing thinking about the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we give acknowledgement to the Holy Spirit when it might more accurately have been a connection of our spirits. That might raise questions such as is there such a thing as our spirit, and if so how does the Holy Spirit connect with our spirit?



Robert Jensen (Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology 2: The Works of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 181) wrote:

Every individual person has and is a spirit: this is his or her personal liveliness, as a 'wind' that stirs that to which he or she directs her personal energies. But also, every community has a spirit, which is not a mere aggregate of members' spirits. So, an athletic team can be composed of superior athletes and still regularly lose, if it lacks 'team spirit', if it has not become a community. A community's spirit is the liveliness that blows through it, the freedom in which it is more than the sum of its parts because each member moves in the liberating impetus of others. The relation between a community's spirit and that of some one or more individual persons varies from situation to situation.

What Jensen was saying is everyone one of us has a spirit, and when we are in a group working together, irrespective of what the group is, there is a point where the group 'spirits' join to create community. The Latin is *es pirit de corps*. It that *es prit de corp* does not happen the group will in many ways fail to function. It is the reason why new groups often begin with 'getting to know you' activities to build that sense of community, the better for achieving the goals of the group. That spirit, our spirit or group spirit, is not the Holy Spirit. An implication might be that when we have a whim or a desire, it might or might not be the Holy Spirit. It might be our spirit's drive to acquire, to achieve, to bond and to belong. It is of the human spirit to have those four drives or motivations, it is how we are made and perfectly fine, it is just not necessarily the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:1 says, 'The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.' As we grow in holiness we become more like but never equal to the Holy Spirit. We remain ever prone to sin. As Dietrick Bonhoeffer (*Santum Communio*, 214) said, 'As a sinful community the church is nevertheless still holy, or rather . . . in this world it is never holy without also being sinful.' The Holy Spirit might have gathered the assembly of God's people joined to Jesus Christ through baptism and faith, but the church remains sinful. Michael Mawson (Michael Mawson, "The Spirit and the Community: Pneumatology and Ecclesiology in Jenson, Hütter and Bonhoeffer," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* Volume 15 Number 4 (October 2013), 468) observed that 'sin and its effects can be seen to permeate' every part of the church, that is God's people, in the structures and practices, in the ways of being and ways of doing. That is unsurprising given that

the church is sinful people becoming holy through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Mawson (*The Spirit*, 467) remarked that 'It is only with God's final judgement that the church's objective spirit (i.e. our spirit) and the Holy Spirit will be made one.'

Christ and the Holy Spirit are working in and through the church as a community of sin. The sinful church is in fact the church of Christ and the Spirit. We are both God's people and the people of God. The church is not an 'ideal' of the future, it is as Mawson (*The Spirit* 468) describes it 'a distinctive and visible witness to the world.' The third article of the Apostle's Creed has the lines 'We believe . . . in the communion of saints, and the forgiveness of sins.' The Creed is saying we are both holy and sinful. We must acknowledge in affirming the Creed that we cannot have forgiveness of sins without confession of sins.

The church is a community of those who have faith and hope in God's promise. Bonhoeffer (*SC* 280) said that 'We believe that it [the church] is the body of Christ, Christ's presence in the world, and that according to the promise, God's Spirit is at work in it.' We give humble thanks and praise that God's Holy Spirit has drawn us into the community of God's people, the body of Christ. We pray that we might be open to God's Spirit 'witness' with our spirit' (Romans 8:16) and that Christ the living Word of God speaks to us convicting us of corporate and personal sin and teaching us the ways of life in him. We pray in faith and hope that Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit might witness through us to a world in deep need.

Blessings
Keith Hamilton
30 April 2026

UNITING CHURCH STAMP COMMITTEE NEWS FROM 2025

Sales of stamps in 2025 was \$12250

In March 2025 Grants totalling \$27100 were given to many churches across the state for welfare food programs and to Synod for refugees to attend Synod 2025. The projects supported covered a range of community meals, cooking classes, breakfast for children who travel long distances to school and others.



Although most of us don't receive many stamps these days maybe you want to dispose of some you have collected over time the Stamp Room accepts donations. Unfortunately there is no market for Australian decimal stamps on paper with a face value of less than 45 cents. They can be sent to the Stamp Committee at PO Box A2178, Sydney South. NSW 1235. Contact is unting.stamps@gmail.com

Trimming and Sorting of stamps – if you need details I can email them to you. Ruth
bathurstucanews@gmail.com

BUSS UPDATE

Anyone in the congregation is welcome to come on the outings which are organised by BUSS .
The two coming up this month are:

Ten Pin Bowling 11 May 12.30 pm
Abercrombie House 21 May
leaving 12.30 pm
Text 0455 328 966 to RSVP

If you would like to go please text your name to the above number. These outings are FREE.

An Easter barbecue lunch was held on Palm Sunday for the whole church. It was hosted by BUSS and was held under the trees at the back of the church in perfect weather. There were around 80 people who attended and it was a great time of excellent food and great fun and fellowship – all accompanied by great music provided by Music BUSS. Keith gave a short talk to the crowd about some of the Easter traditions.



At the SMART group lunch on the Wednesday before Easter Keith spoke about why we have hollow chocolate eggs at Easter the meanings of some of the Easter traditions and each of the lunch guests was given an olive wood holding cross, which is also referred to as a comfort cross. The cross is smooth, rounded and fits in the palm of your hand.



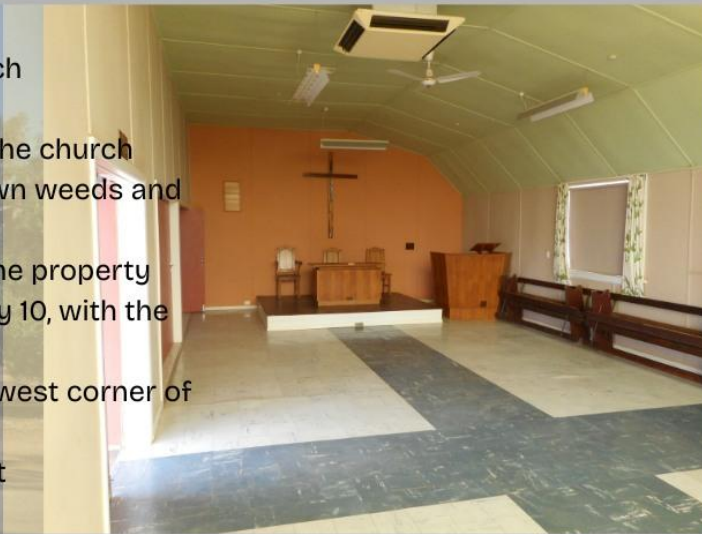
Flying Patrol and Outback Links to Undertake Work on Tibooburra Church
The Flying Patrol, in conjunction with Outback Links, will be meeting in Tibooburra to carry out maintenance and beautification work on the Tibooburra Church.

The planned activities include:

- Spring cleaning and a facelift for the church
- Painting the external windows and eaves
- Painting the ceiling, walls, and trim inside the church
- Tidying the grounds by removing overgrown weeds and trimming shrubs
- Erecting a new fence across the front of the property

A team of 10 volunteers will begin work on May 10, with the project concluding on May 20.

Are you looking for a reason to visit the northwest corner of New South Wales? Here's your opportunity! If you're interested in assisting, please contact Therese at Outback Links on 0488 709 010.



From Macquarie Darling Presbytery - Do you have a heart for helping? Do you have some time on your hands in May? Do you love to travel and see parts of Australia that aren't on the tourist track? You might be just the person for this project!

Mowing Roster

16 May Alan
30 May Henry
James
Peter

PLEASE NOTE

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

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

Worship Services

9.30 am in the church

3 May Rev Keith Hamilton **Holy Communion**

10 May Monday Morning Bible Study

Mother's Day

17 May Rev Keith Hamilton

24 May Fred Boseto/ Rev Keith Hamilton

Pentecost

31 May Rev Keith Hamilton **Trinity Sunday**

7 June Rev Keith Hamilton **Holy Communion**

'Sunday @ 5'

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

On the first Sunday of each month there will be Holy Communion and a shared meal.