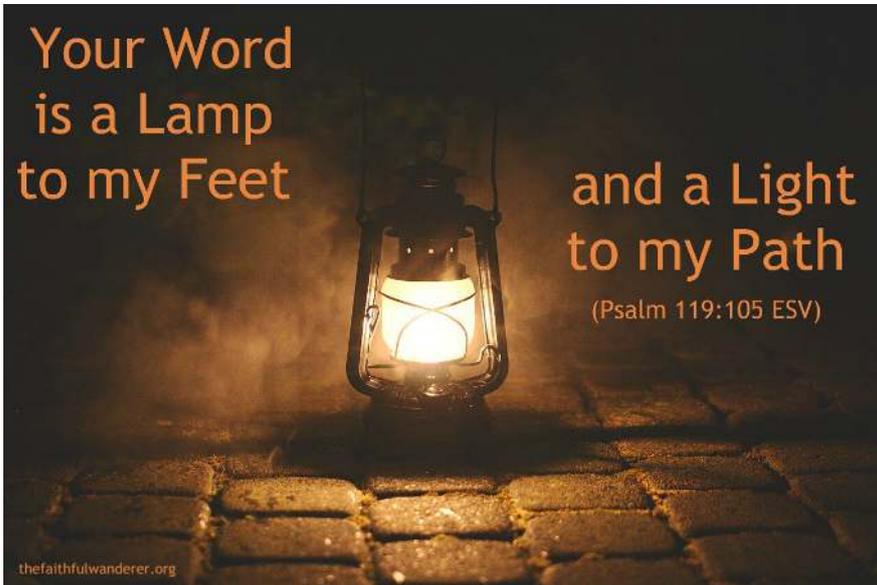


BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

Weekly Email Newsletter



Victoria - FAQs

Due to the number of queries coming into our Synod office it's becoming increasingly difficult for people, congregations, presbyteries and organisations to stay abreast of what is and isn't permitted. In a bid to assist you, our Coronavirus Crisis Team has gathered your frequently asked questions and attempted to provide easy answers, saving you from having to pick up a phone or send an email.

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News from Traralgon with Geoff & Liz

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Frontier News (Jean Murray)

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Birthdays

We would like to celebrate with you significant events and milestones such as birthdays and anniversaries. You may forward the details to Lynne Rankin and then watch this space.

Invitation - Virtual Morning Tea

Who says that we can no longer get together for a good old yarn and a catch up over cuppa after worship service of a Sunday morning? Those of us who joined did just that at 11.00am last Sunday morning. It was great to see each other and to hear each others voices at the same time sharing what has occupied us in the last few weeks. We would like to invite you to join us every Sunday morning at 11.00am for a time of catch-up and fellowship. Join us for half an hour or just for 5 minutes. We would love to see you. A Zoom invitation will be emailed to you on Friday each week. Hit the link provided, bring your cuppa and your story to share. See You Sunday Morning!!!

Community at Home

Members of our congregation we need your input for this section PLEASE!



Executive Committee Update

HALL USE

As from the Start of Term 3 next Monday The Mini Maestros program will return to our Hall. Previously they have used the Meeting Room (Sunday School) each Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday mornings.

To meet the Social Distancing requirements they will conduct their program in the Fellowship Room. This will mean that the Fellowship Room will be "Off Limits" until we resume our regular Church functions and the social distancing rules are relaxed.

Mini Maestros will carry out all the necessary recording and Hygiene requirements for their program and the areas they use.

Church members are requested to refrain from using The Fellowship Room and the Disabled Toilets unless absolutely necessary.

THE ROCK

There was a man who had a dream. He heard God speaking to him:

"Press hard against the large rock."

He did not understand this until the morning. He looked out from his hut and saw a huge rock that had rolled down the hillside.

He began to push and push, but he could not move the rock. Throughout the day he had several attempts, but he could not move it. Convinced that God had spoken to him, he made a mission of this task and for weeks he spent some hours every day but he could not budge the rock.

A traveller came by and asked him what he was doing.

"God told me to move this rock," he replied. The traveller laughed and said, "You must be mistaken. You will never move a rock that large."

Still the man continued his attempts to move the rock without success. Another traveller came by some weeks later and asked what he was doing.

"God told me to move this rock," he replied. The traveller scorned him and said, "Your God is stupid to ask such a thing. It is impossible. Give up."

That night the man turned to God in his prayer:

"Lord, I have done what you asked, but the task is impossible and it seems you have made fun of me. The travellers have mocked me for believing that I could move the rock as you asked me to do."

Then God spoke gently to him:

"My son. Look at your strong arms and legs; look at the rippling muscles in your back; look at the tanned hardness of your skin. Look at your increased strength. Look what has happened to you. You are a different man! I asked you to press against the rock and this you have done. I never told you to move it!"

Everything God asks us to do is for our own good. Even if at the time we do not see it.

*From the
Pastor's
Desk*



- that is his desk in Traralgon.



It is a desk from which not much has happened in these past months. Perhaps this piece of writing maybe a catalyst for more!

Some may remember Liz's 'encouragement' that I would have six months off when I retire – and now twelve months have passed, but I am running ahead and haven't even said hello. Yes, hello from sunny but not very warm Gippsland and hello from Liz and Geoff, now well settled in our new home and garden. It is hard to believe that last Sunday marked twelve months since that farewell event we celebrated together.

And as we look back we are not only grateful for that day and the contributions and well wishes from each of you but also for the fifteen years we shared in ministry in Belmont and surrounds. Far too many memories and people to write about here so we say thank you all, and move on to the task at hand – a challenge from Ikani and Ray to write about what we have been doing.

Well our first month was spent on a Gippsland farm, helping brother Rod and Sister-in-law Julie prepare for a clearing sale and their move from farm to a house in Maffra. Fifty years of farm implements and household chattels, treasures and memories. A challenging time for already tired bodies but lots of enjoyment in the midst of laughs and tears.

From that time we returned to Grovedale to ponder and explore where the future may lead us. Having already decided that a house move should take place, we attended many house open inspections, the search taking us around Geelong, Warragul and Drouin and even back to our old roots in Traralgon. We prepared our Grovedale home for sale and perhaps to our surprise we found ourselves buying a home in Traralgon on the same day our house sold.

With the help of Rod and Julie and removalists the move was successfully made just one week before Christmas. Just enough was unpacked and sorted quickly in readiness for Simon and Mel's visit from New York. So in our new home with Simon and Mel as 'Chefs extraordinaire' we celebrated and enjoyed Christmas with all eleven of our family. With Christmas over we began the task of settling into our new home and reconnecting with church and community. Our house provides all we need and is on one level. Garden, while a little tired is welcoming and manageable and will provide all the challenges we might wish to engage in.

The country city has grown but is easy to navigate around. Will we reconnect with old friends, or will new friends be part of our lives into the future? Perhaps the hope is for both. Neighbours have been welcoming and when Geoff is in the front garden he enjoys meeting those who walk by with their dogs. Just a short walk at the end of our street is a man-made lake, home to ducks that waddle up the street to pay us a visit from time to time.

Alas, before much happened we like all of our country found ourselves in lockdown. It has been a stalling of our reconnecting but it has enabled us to tackle and complete a number of improvements in the house and rejuvenate the garden. We are pleased to have these things done sooner than we may have anticipated.

Liz has been able to attend to a few sewing requests and Geoff has spent many hours in the church garden. We have delivered the church news sheet and printed service to some in our end of town that do not have internet access. Early on Geoff made a couple of pastoral visits to long standing friends in care and he has attended just one 'church' meeting, four people in an outdoor space discussing the possibility of setting up a community garden.

Of a Sunday and sometimes during the week we have enjoyed joining in worship with people in Adelaide, Melbourne and a place called Belmont. While we miss joining others in worship, we are grateful for the many opportunities of on line worship. We considered it a privilege recently to share in the funeral services of Reg Duthie and Kees Demeester. We are often reminded in various ways of our friends in Geelong; we were disappointed at not being able to visit you all on the cancelled crazy whist night and weekend as we had planned. Thanks for your ongoing emails, newsletters, photos, phone calls and prayers.

Well enough of my ramblings, I hope I have given you a little of the picture of our story so far. Perhaps you will remember me encouraging you to look up at Benediction time – so look up- *photos page 4*



Our house & freshly mowed lawn



Our back garden



Our lake



Our Boys



Our lake

May the love and peace of our God be with you all.
And then look around and continue to bless those whom you share life with.
With much love, your friends, Liz and Geoff.

Worship at Home

Materials for 'Worship at home' are prepared by the © ROOTS for Churches Ltd 2020 www.rootsontheweb.com

A world of wheat and weeds... Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43

A Personal Prayer

The field is the world. Lord, I live in a tiny patch of your world but it is still my field to serve you. I pray that I will give my time and gifts to you and yours in whatever way I can. Your kingdom come, O Lord. Amen.

Notes on the Bible readings

Jesus tells a parable about a field of wheat that also contains weeds – and specifically, a weed that looks much like the wheat. The servants ask their master if they should pull up the weeds, but the master says the two must grow together. Until both are fully grown it is hard to identify the weeds from the wheat. Pulling up the one will almost certainly damage the other.

These passages all have something to say about the power of God and God's action in the world. But they also all testify to the ongoing presence of evil and suffering. Jesus preaches that the kingdom is near, and Paul says that believers are now children of God, but both describe situations where the kingdom of God coexists with other incompatible elements that still cause 'stumbling'.

The master's response in the passage is helpful, as it reassures the reader that he knows what is going on and has a solution to bring about a healthy and full harvest. It is a fact of our existence that good exists alongside evil and ongoing temptations, until the end of time. But this reading reminds us that we are not in charge, and that we are called to live together.

Questions for Reflection

1. What do you see in this image?
2. Where do you see 'weeds' and 'wheat' growing together in the world?
3. How might God be calling you to cope with the tensions this causes?

Wheat around the world

If you have access to the internet, look up stories on Tearfund's website (www.tearfund.org) outlining how God is at work in local churches throughout the world. Could anything you've read inspire you or your local church? Could you take any specific action?

A Prayer for Others

Lord God, we pray for our world and its people. So many different cultures, colours, languages – but we are all your children, all special in our own right. Whatever our gender, race, colour or creed, we all belong to you. We pray that we might learn to live in harmony with each other, to recognise that even someone halfway around the world is still our neighbour in your sight. Far or near, we all belong to you. With today's technology we have access to news from afar, almost before it happens. Help us not to become blasé about the situations we see, but to pray and care faithfully for all concerned. In war or peace, we all belong to you. We pray for those near and dear to us: protect them, wrap them in your loving arms, and in sorrow and in joy, be with them. Near or far, we all belong to you. We all belong to you and need your love. Amen

Live your faith

Offer to do some weeding in a friend's/elderly neighbour's/the church's garden (NB within current social distancing guidelines). Make each weed you pull up part of your prayer that God will help you embrace the wheat in your life, and reject weeds.

Lectionary Readings

July 12 - Pent 6

Gen 25: 19-34
Psalm 119: 105-112
Rom 8: 1-11
Mt 13: 1-9, 18-23

July 19 - Pent 7

Gen 28: 10-91
Psalm 139: 1-12, 23-24
Rom 8: 12-25
Mt 13: 24-30, 36-43

July 26 - Pent 8

Gen 29: 15-28
Psalm 105: 1-11
Rom 8: 26-39
Mt 13: 31-33, 44-52

August 2 - Pent 9

Gen 32: 22- 31
Psalm 17: 1- 7, 15
Rom 9: 1-5
Mt 14: 13-21



Prayer Points For the Week

by Peter Woods

Dear God, help us to understand the Parable of the Sower which helps us as Christians to know the importance of developing a personal faith in Jesus Christ. May we bare the fruits of the Spirit: love, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, joy, peace, humility and self control.

Dear Heavenly Father, we pray for people who have been locked down in their units or homes in recent days due to government regulations related to COVID - 19. May You assure them of Your love and peace during these difficult times.

Loving God, may we see that trust is an essential thread which runs through the whole of life. Teach us the art of trusting and maintaining a complete confidence in You, day by day. Amen



Prayer Requests:

Please forward your prayer requests to Liz Moss by emailing - liz.moss@bigpond.com
Mobile: 0428 579 479

This week we pray for

Each week, in alphabetical order as per our Church Roll, we are asked to pray for 5 members or families of our congregation. This week we are praying for the following:

1. Margaret James
2. Rob & Jill Jeffers
3. Bill & Sue Jennings
4. Marion Jensen
5. Trevor Jepson

Jesus Loves Even Me - by Inspiration Ministries

"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love." – John 15:9 NASB

Philip Bliss joined the audience in Chicago, singing about his love for Jesus. But as he sang in this evening service in June 1870, he asked himself this question: "Have I not been singing enough about my poor love for Jesus, and shall I not rather sing of his great love for me?"

That night, Bliss, who was born on this day in 1838, wrote the hymn "Jesus Loves Even Me." Hearing the hymn, his wife instantly recognized its impact. She was unable to "get it out of [her] mind."

Bliss wrote about a divine love: "I am so glad that our Father in Heav'n tells of His love in the Book He has giv'n." The wonderful message was that Jesus loves us, even if we wander away.

It was love that brought Jesus to earth. And the Spirit constantly reminds us that Jesus loves us. Just knowing this love exists enables us to find rest. When we trust in Jesus, we know we are blessed. Satan flees "when I just tell him that Jesus loves me."

Bliss looked forward to seeing Jesus face to face in eternity, where his song would be, "Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me!" Today, remember that Jesus loves you just as you are! Receive that love. Let that love banish all fear and worry. Allow that love to transform your life. Share that love with others. Let them know that He loves them, too!

NEW PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES AND FUTURE GIVING.

Envelopes for the 2020-21 are now available for any of our members who desire to use them. These envelopes have numbers on them but the recording of these has been discontinued in view of the difficulties caused by lack of person-power to record and the fact that the reason for doing the recording has been found to be of minimal use. The weekly dates are still on the envelopes.

Envelopes can be collected from the church and are available on the table in the foyer and can be collected for you by a friend or your visitor if you are at the church at any time.

Jeannine and Graeme continue to be at the church each Sunday from 10.00 to 10.30 am and envelopes can be collected then. Any members may use the envelopes even if you haven't used them in the past. No recording of the numbers will be done so just take the envelopes as required.

Our Treasurer, Jeannine, on behalf of Church Council, thanks sincerely all of our members who have continued their giving so generously throughout the whole year, but especially in the past few months of lockdown.

Many of you have been using direct debit in the past few months and may wish to continue to give in this way in the future. That option is still available for you. In the meantime current methods of giving remain.

Graeme Allen
(Planned Giving)

Could any cheques sent in the mail have; "*Attention Treasurer*" on the front of the envelope as this saves Glen opening them.

1. Direct Debit

Please contact myself or Graeme Allen if you require any help doing this, and so we can supply you our banking details

2. PayPal (via Belmont Uniting Church website)

3. By mail (cheques only - do not send cash) Belmont Uniting Church PO Box 480 Belmont 3216

Please DO NOT place money or envelopes in the letterbox at the Church. Feel free to contact myself or Graeme if you have any queries: Jeannine Oman -Treasurer - jeannineoman62@gmail.com 0499119101
Graeme Allen— Assistant Treasurer - 0416148080



Contribution to the Newsletter

If you wish to contribute to our Newsletter, please email Ray & Julie Ferguson at the News Desk
rayjulie@internode.on.net

Young People's Program

We offer all our young people our prayers and support as they continue to adapt to the new online learning environment from the comfort of their homes. Part of that support is the offering of online YPG's program provided by their leader Lynne Rankin. A weekly story and activities are prepared and posted up onto our website for our young people to enjoy.

Thank you Lynne for this great initiative.

