



BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

8th August Weekly Newsletter 2021

2021 - THE YEAR OF HOPE

Imitators of Christ

When the Jewish leaders who had been listening to Jesus asked, 'Who does he think he is?' They had conveniently forgotten that their own history was full of unlikely people, chosen and empowered by God to do God's work. Their assumptions about the nature of the long-awaited Messiah prevented them from recognising him when he came. Who had they been expecting?

God chooses those who appear the least likely to do the job on their own, testing our faith in him and in ourselves.



In a similar way, Paul reminds the community in Ephesus that their assumptions of how to live a life of true followers of Christ is further from the truth if they continue to sin, steal, be angry and bitter with each other. They must now become imitators of God as beloved children, "and in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

It is a timely reminder for us all in this time of lockdown. God offers the same to each of us, no matter the often misguided assumptions we hold for others and ourselves for in a relationship with Jesus there should be no limits to what we can do together.

Yet we are quick to limit ourselves and others. We all live within the constraints of our assumptions, quickly judging people and situations on very little evidence or experience. Would you have recognised Jesus in his earthly ministry as being the Messiah, the 'bread of life? Do we recognise him today? Do we allow others to be God's messengers to us today? Do we see Jesus in the lives of his unlikely disciples, and is he recognisable in ourselves?

Jesus referred his listeners back to the manna that God had provided from heaven, and which came daily to feed their physical needs. The bread of life that Jesus offers is to be enough for each day, but it is also part of the long-term diet plan that builds us up and sustains us for the journey of eternal life.

I wonder what set of assumptions we hold for being Christians in this time of uncertainty. What might be the assumptions that society is making about our faith and what goes on in our churches? I am quietly hoping that whatever assumptions are being made, they will witness in our lives the fruits of the Spirit in us as imitators of Christ.



Latest on our Sunday Worship Services - more details on page 6

8 August - Online zoom service

15 August - Online zoom service - without Holy Communion

22 August - To be announced

29 August - To be announced

Worship At Home

Acknowledgement of Country

Today, as we gather together, we acknowledge the Wauthaurong Peoples, the first inhabitants of this place from time beyond remembering. We acknowledge that through this land, God nurtured and sustained the First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

Reading: Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Call to Worship

Hear these words from the apostle Paul: be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

A prayer of adoration and thanksgiving

Lord God, we thank you so much that you are not a distant God, who can only be worshipped from afar. We thank you that we are your dearly loved children. Through Jesus you came close to us, so that we can truly know you. Thank you, dear God, that in Christ we are part of your great plan. Amen.

Sharing the Word

Kipling called words 'the most powerful drug used by mankind'. A schoolteacher is accused of abusing a pupil and is immediately suspended. An investigation reveals no truth in the accusation, but her career is in tatters and her mental health ruined. A father castigates his son, calling him a failure over and over again. Marlon Brando went into films partly to escape constant criticism from his father.

Today's Ephesians passage says put away falsehood, speak the truth, let no evil talk come out of your mouth, put away wrangling and slander. The reason for these instructions lies in sensitivity to our common membership of one body (v. 25). Ephesians 4 is about our God-given unity, strengthened or broken by our words and behaviour (vv. 2-4 and 15; Romans 12.5; 1 Corinthians 10.17). There is a place for firm, even critical talk but it must always be for building up the body, and for the good of our fellow Christian (v. 29). That rules out point-scoring, private empire building, slanderous gossip and character assassination. If this is true of Christ's body the Church, it will equally be true of other communities to which Christians belong — family, home, work.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord God, there are so many people who need the difference in their lives that only you can bring. Lord, sometimes we feel so useless when faced with all the needs of our world. We forget the important part we play just by opening our lives to you, praying to you, and being your hands and feet. We pray today for our families, our friends, our peers, our teachers. We pray for everyone who has helped us grow closer to you; for our church family, and our ministers. We pray for our community, the world in which we live and work and have our being. We pray for people who feel they have nothing to share, nothing even to live for; the homeless, prisoners, people at the end of relationships, the sick and those who mourn. Help us to share through our prayer and through our care. Amen.

Blessing

Speak the truth. Be kind to one another. Never let the sun go down on your anger. Never give evil room to manoeuvre. Go now in the blessing of God the Maker, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Go and share the bread of life.

Take Home Ideas

This week make space each day to consider different parts of your life and those with whom you interact in those parts of your life. You might think about family, friends, work colleagues, church members, those in service industries, and so on. Think about the nature of your relationships with other people, about both the healthy relationships and those that are dysfunctional.

- What caused the problems in these relationships?
- What part did you play?
- What could you do to bring reconciliation before it is too late?

→ ROSTER BELOW IS PENDING COVID ANNOUNCEMENTS ←

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Aug 22	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	L. Jackson	R. Pearson	R. Jeffers	R. Ferguson	B. Jennings	L. Rankin
					J. Jeffers			

Date	Communion	Flowers	Morning Tea
Aug 22	N/A	R. Buckwell	Nola & Peter Woods
			Liz Moss

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Aug 29	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	G. Allen	G. Coomber	A. Merritt	R. Ferguson	D. Zucarro	L. Rankin
					T. Yates			

Date	Communion	Flowers	Morning Tea
Aug 29	N/A	R. Buckwell	Fay & Wal Harper
			Katrina Haas

If for any reason you are unable to attend your rostered duty, please endeavour to swap with anyone & contact the worship leader and the Newsletter Editor too.

Prayer Points For the Week

Dear Lord, it is so easy in today's world to worry about a whole range of things. Help us to overcome our fears; teach us to turn to You in prayer, trusting that You are in charge and allowing Your peace to reign over us.

Loving God, thank you for the community of believers at the Belmont Uniting Church. When we face challenges in life we are thankful for the support of other Christians who are prepared to encourage us and help us. May we know the importance of loving and caring for others.

Dear Heavenly Father, we pray for people in Europe, in particular Greece which have been devastated by forest fires. Dozens of homes have been destroyed and people have been evacuated from five villages. Bless the fire fighters and medical staff as they assist people in need. *Peter Woods*

Lectionary Readings

Aug 8- Pentecost 11	Aug 15 - Pentecost 12	Aug 22 - Pentecost 13	Aug 29 - Pentecost 14
2 Sam 18: 5 - 9, 31 - 33	1 Kgs 2: 10 - 12, 3: 31 - 33	1 Kgs 8: 22 - 30, 41 - 43	Song 2: 8 - 13
Psalms 130	Psalms 111	Psalms 84	Psalms 45: 1 - 2, 6 - 9
Eph 4: 25 - 5: 2	Eph 5: 15 - 20	Eph 6: 10 - 20	Jas 1: 17 - 27
John 6: 35, 41 - 51	John 6: 51 - 58	John 6: 56 - 69	Mark 7: 1 - 8, 14 - 15, 21 - 23

Prayers For Others

There Is No One Like Jesus

I Have a Friend Named Jesus

John and Doreen Stephens - our special prayers continue for John.

The Mitchell Family - both Heather and John's daughters Joanne (Cameron) and Lani (Rollauer) are dealing with health issues. Please keep all families in your prayers.

There is no one like Jesus
Our Savior and Lord
The message is timeless
The price we could not afford.

On the cross
He bore our shame
Suffering, He died,
Our souls to reclaim.

Three days later
He rose from the grave,
Purchased our pardon,
We are no longer enslaved.

I have a friend named Jesus.
Theres no other friend like He.
I have a friend named Jesus.
Gave His life to set me free.

I have a friend named Jesus.
A perfect, sinless man.
I have a friend named Jesus.
For me He has a plan.

I have a friend named Jesus.
On Him I can rely.
I have a friend named Jesus.
All my needs He will supply.

Homelessness Week August 1-7

This week is National Homelessness Week. According to Homelessness Australia, “In Australia, there are over 116,000 people experiencing homelessness on any given night. Homelessness Week aims to raise awareness of the impact of homelessness on Australia via national and local community events, including providing information on the importance of housing as a solution and educating communities on how they can make a difference.”



In our Greater Geelong region, around 4,500 people will access homeless services each year. There are over 3,300 households in our region alone living in social housing. This figure is expected to rise in the coming years. That is a staggering number, and no wonder most, if not all, of the homelessness services are constantly overwhelmed with increasing demand on their service with minimal resources.

Homelessness is a complex issue and must be addressed by the collective efforts of both governments, private and community sectors. I have posted up to our website the Geelong Council’s ‘Social Housing Plan 2020 -2041, which was adopted at the beginning of this year. This time three years ago, our congregation sponsored me to take part in the Homelessness Sleepout at Kardinia Park. Together we raised over \$5000.00 to go towards local homelessness initiatives. The complexity of the issue around homelessness requires a mighty effort by all sectors of our community to advocate and protect the most vulnerable of our society.

Some of you would recall the confronting image of a homeless man sleeping outside the front door of our church last winter. Terry’s story struck me. He was originally from South Australia, and he came down with his girlfriend to find work in Victoria some years ago. When their relationship broke down, Terry became homeless and lived on the streets of Melbourne and Geelong for many years. And all these years, he was still harbouring a desire to one day be reunited with his dad in South Australia.

The power of Terry’s story is the sobering reminder that homelessness has a human face. Homelessness is not just about statistics but a reminder that behind every number is a human story. Terry’s story is a powerful one – that the Terry of the world is not just a homeless person, but like all of us, a person who longs for the most basic offering of life – a sense of connection, family to belong and a place to call home.



Everybody needs a home.

Support #HomelessnessWeek21
1-7 August 2021
homelessnessaustralia.org.au

→ NOTICES ←

SCONES, JAM & CREAM/SAVOURY OR PLAIN

Please be advised that due to the current snap lockdown, this fundraising is now postponed. A new date will be communicated to you when it is known.

The Social Justice Group is providing the morning tea as a fundraiser for the ALOLA Foundation.

This East Timor charity supports women and children in many aspects including assistance for victims of domestic violence, health and education. \$75 will provide a scholarship for a girl to stay in school and gain a qualification to prepare her for work.

We are asking, if you feel able, for a donation to go toward providing some \$75 scholarships. East Timor has a population of 1.3 million. Covid19 numbers are high but probably underreported. The Australian Government is providing some vaccine assistance.



BELMONT UNITING EVENING FELLOWSHIP

Wed August 25 at 1.30pm - Please note time

Raye Pearson will come and tell us about her many travels on this afternoon. **Everyone is invited!!** There will hopefully be a cuppa too. Please keep checking the Newsletter in case of any changes due to Covid



BUC FACEBOOK PAGE

Please follow, like or share our new facebook page

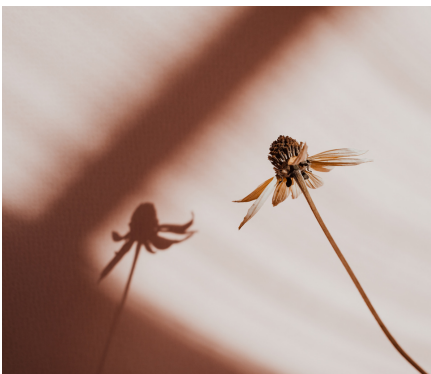
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069883847973>

Our Brother, Our Friend

God sent us the greatest gift of all,
the only person who knows true love.
Jesus is this person who nourishes us,
mind body and soul.

No matter what we do,
where we are,
who we are with,

it is Jesus who is really with us.
He knows what we've been through,
understands all our thoughts,
embraces us with open arms,
even if we do not do the same to him.



NOTICES continued.....



NEWS FLASH

In line with the lockdown restrictions, the in-person worship service for this Sunday August 8th is cancelled. Instead, you are welcome to join together online for a Zoom worship service at the same time of 10.00 am using this zoom link:

[https://zoom.us/j/99984774012?](https://zoom.us/j/99984774012?pwd=Ky85NGtwbnZqb1h2YzFGNDdDZEMlQT09)

[pwd=Ky85NGtwbnZqb1h2YzFGNDdDZEMlQT09](https://zoom.us/j/99984774012?pwd=Ky85NGtwbnZqb1h2YzFGNDdDZEMlQT09)

Meeting ID: 999 8477 4012 - Passcode: 1234

Any changes to this current arrangement will be communicated to you promptly. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Congratulations to BUC

It is a great joy to announce that our grant application to the Presbytery of Port Phillip West Simpson Fund for the amount of \$3000.00 was successful.

The grant was awarded for the purpose of replacing our overhead projector and screen. The new projector and screen have now been installed with crisp clear images for all to enjoy in years to come.

Words of grateful thanks to Ray Ferguson and Glen Coomber and Rev. Ikani for spearheading this successful application and Ray for organising its instalment.



A brief history of the Simpson Fund

William Simpson of Belmont left the bulk of his estate to the Bishop of Melbourne, the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Presbytery of Geelong for “home mission work within the bounds of the Presbytery”. He had died on 31 January 1893 and was buried on 1 February at the Eastern Cemetery, Geelong. On 6 June 1893, the Presbytery received £500 and the money was invested.

Over the years additional bequests and gifts have been added to the Simpson Fund (formerly known as the Simpson Bequest). The amount for allocation each year is determined by the earnings from investments of the Fund. When our new Presbytery was formed, the Simpson Fund became available to the whole of the new Presbytery, and the criteria have been established for its use.

In 2014 the Presbytery’s Standing Committee (SC) decided to amend the then Simpson Bequest Policy to allow for a second round of offers every year. In September 2015 the term “Bequest” was replaced by “Fund” to reflect more accurately the nature of the fund. In 2019 a small allocation was made to allow for Property and Equipment grants.

Community News

Riley Kevin Gill's Baptism

It was in early February that Riley's parents Suzie and Stewart were discussing Riley's baptism with Rev Ikani. Due to Riley having now outgrown his baptismal clothes, new ones were sourced in preparation for this Sunday, but the wait is still not yet over for Riley. Thankfully, big sister Bridie is keeping him focussed and motivated as they eagerly await Riley's turn to be baptised and welcomed as a member of the family of God. Thank you Riley for your patience!



Greetings from Jeannine, Greg & family

Greetings everyone, I hope everyone is well. Things certainly are still crazy with covid and as hard as it is with lockdowns it is something that we need to do. We are very grateful to be up here with our animals and busy farm life.

The boys when they have been able to go love there new school and are doing extremely well. They have joined the Kyabram football team and have enjoyed playing footy. Leilani is growing everyday.

We were told to wait for the summer weather as its so hot, no one told us how cold it gets in the wintertime -some mornings have been - 2 degrees.

Our animals give us so much joy and meaning to each day. We miss our family and friends but the people we have met here are very kind and welcoming. Country life is beautiful and we are very grateful and happy here.

Love to you all. The Omans.



Gwen and Sharon moving to Bendigo

Our Church community wishes Gwen Cooper and daughter Sharon our best wishes and prayers as they settle in to their new community in Bendigo. Although the absence of their presence and companionship will be deeply felt, we wish them and their new home the blessings of the Psalmist" The Lord says, 'I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.'" Psalm 32:4

Goodbye

Daily Reflections

Offering each morning and evening are available for your daily devotion through our website - click on the menu heading 'Worship and Faith' then select 'Daily Devotions' on the drop-down menu.

Falling in Love the Biblical Way

Reflections on Song of Songs

I'm quick to fall in love; my wife takes her time. Luckily, this boded well for me. I fell in love with Kalene literally at first sight. Since I had planned for Kalene to be my bandmate—we were meeting for a music audition—I later tried to argue myself out of being pain-in-my-gut in love. My one music rule: “Bandmates don't date other bandmates.” So, I ended my “techno meets indy rock” career. But as I fell out of love with weird music and into love with Kalene, I saw that she wasn't quite in love with me. It took Kalene a month or more to fall for me. But once two people fall in love, there is little anyone can do to stop them.

Song of Songs is an epic biblical poem about falling in love. It's so gushy that it's almost ludicrous.

Love must be the most powerful of all emotions—and we see this throughout Song of Songs. There is a beautiful woman, who is ready to marry. The woman and her future husband are on a journey, awaiting their wedding day (Song 3:6–11). Along their journey, the couple writes some don't-let-your-parents-see-it poetry. At one point, the woman says:

“My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! He is standing behind our wall, gazing through the window, looking through the lattice. My beloved answered and said to me, ‘Arise, my beloved! Come, my beauty!’ ” (Song 2:9–10).

Romeo and Juliet suddenly doesn't seem so original. Later on, the woman says: “On my bed in the night, I sought him whom my heart loves. I sought him, but I did not find him” (Song of Songs 3:1). Upon marriage, the man remarks:

“Look! You are beautiful, my beloved! Look! You are beautiful! Your eyes are doves from behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats that move down from the mountains of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that came up from the washing.... You are completely beautiful, my beloved! You are flawless!” (Song 4:1–2, 7).

That's how you compliment a woman in the ancient world. It doesn't work as well on my wife—I know, I've tried—so men, spare your wife the pain.

Song of Songs is full of things that only lovers say; it's words spoken in the dark. But in this biblical context of marriage, these words can be spoken in the light. Song of Song shows us that an authentic and loving relationship between a man and a woman is a beautiful thing. Pursuing one another, with marriage in mind, and continuing to pursue each other after getting married—to date one another—is wonderful.

Love will take hold of those who let it. And love is meant to be expressed. Whether you're writing grunge-techno music or trying to figure out what to do with the weirdo musician you just met, love will find a way, if God means for it to do so.

This all sounds cliché and is a bit sappy, but in a world full of cynicism and divorce, I'm glad that I'm madly in love with my wife after knowing her for nearly a decade. And I'm thrilled that the Bible endorses me falling even more in love with her. Without Song of Songs, I couldn't tell Kalene that her neck looks like the Tower of David—and that would be a tragedy.

Barry, J. D. (2014). Falling in Love the Biblical Way. In J. D. Barry & R. Van Noord (Eds.), Moment with God: A Devotional on Every Biblical Book. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs

LOCKDOWN UPDATE | ALL VICTORIA | AUGUST 5 2021.



Victoria has entered a snap 7-day lockdown as of 8:00pm Thursday August 5*

The following restrictions currently apply across all Victoria:

- **There are only 5 reasons to leave home:**
 - ▶ Shopping (within 5km of home, unless nearest shop further than 5km)
 - ▶ Exercise (within 5km of home, max 2 hours per day, with max 1 other person or members of your household)
 - ▶ Authorised work or Education
 - ▶ Caregiving & medical treatments
 - ▶ To get vaccinated
- **Masks** must be worn (indoors and outside) unless at home or with a valid exemption.
- **No visitors to the home, other than intimate partner.** Anyone who lives alone may create a "bubble" with one other person.
- **No public gatherings.**
- **Worship services** – Broadcast only. 5 people max in broadcasting.
- **Funerals** – maximum of 10 people plus those required to conduct the funeral.
- **Weddings may not proceed.** The only exceptions are for end-of-life or if deportation is pending.
- **Schools** – closed except for vulnerable children or children of emergency workers.
- **Adult education** – Online only.
- **Childcare and Early Learning** – may remain open.
- **Restaurants/Cafes** – Open for takeaway or delivery services only.
- **Libraries and Toy Libraries** – Click and Collect services only.
- **Residential Aged Care** – No visitors, with very limited exceptions.
- **Hospitals** – Visitors only for end-of-life, or one support person for childbirth.
- **All entertainment, hospitality, accommodation and tourism to remain closed.**
- Travel between Metro Melbourne and Regional Victoria is not allowed, unless for a permitted reason.

*** Premier Daniel Andrews has stated that the end date for this lockdown will remain dependant on case numbers and contact tracing.**

Whilst current active Coronavirus cases are in metropolitan Melbourne, sewerage tests in regional Victoria have indicated the presence of Covid, so lockdown extends to the entire state.

Should you require any further detail, please see DHHS website: [DHHS website](#) or the [Coronavirus Victoria](#) website.

Should you have any further questions please email the [Crisis Management Team](#).



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA