



BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

11th July Weekly Newsletter 2021

2021 - THE YEAR OF HOPE

'Count Our Blessings'

I want to share with you two highlights of my week.

Firstly, last Thursday was my son Ben's 21st birthday.

As we have done so with all birthdays in my family, and they were many, we woke up early and thanked God for the many blessings showered upon us through God's unmerited gift or *charism* given to Ben. St Paul speaks of this gift or charism as unique to every Christ-follower graciously apportioned by the Spirit. If the last 21 years were to serve as an indication of what God has in store for our family, O how grateful we are for the generosity of God's grace and the richness of his mercy and love.



Secondly, I was richly blessed by the conversations I had with some of our members at Nangatta and Murray, Uniting Age Well Kalkee. Their infectious delight of belonging to a caring and supportive community, their appreciation of the commitment and dedication of staff who are always willing to walk the extra mile, and the joy of receiving visits from family and friends after the recent period of lockdown are just some of the many blessings they now enjoy. I remember that there was an old chorus called 'Count your blessings'.

Count your blessings — name them one by one. Count your blessings see what God has done.

Count your blessings — name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

I know that this chorus speaks volumes for my family and those of our friends I visited this week.

This chorus invites us to count our blessings and open our eyes to realise how blessed we are. When we consider family, friends in our lives, places we have visited, the food we have eaten, clothes, books, music, medical treatment, transport and even belonging to a caring and supportive community that is BUC, we glimpse at the fullness of God's bountiful provisions and grace in our lives.

From our Epistle reading for this week, Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul gives us another set of reasons why we are blessed. God blessed us in Christ, who showed us a way of life that calls us to live fully, to love wastefully and to be all that each of us can be. God gives us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Paul has more than one list of the spiritual fruits we can be blessed by.

Paul tells us that we are chosen, incredible as it seems. Grace is freely bestowed on us, even though we did nothing to earn it or deserve it. It is a free gift. God forgives us whenever we miss the mark.

We are marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. What does this image mean? In the days before, envelopes, letters and important documents were sealed with a lump of hot melted wax stamped with the signet ring of the sender. When someone received a letter with the seal intact, they knew the letter had not been tampered with. Furthermore, the seal assured them that the letter had not been forged. The Holy Spirit seals us with God's blessings, assuring us that God's blessings are genuine. As you enter into the journey of this week, may the Holy Spirit assure you of God's rich blessings and undeserved grace freely offered to us through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev Ikani Vaitohi

Reconciliation in the Park 2021

Take 2!

FREE EVENT - Everyone welcome

Due to the Victorian COVID-19 outbreak lockdown in late May, this is our new event date during NAIDOC Week. We hope you will join us.



SUNDAY 11 JULY
10am – 3pm
Johnstone Park
Geelong



www.facebook.com/recinthepark
www.geelongonfire.org.au

More than a word. ***Reconciliation takes action***

Featuring:

- Welcome to Country
 - Local Dancers
 - Local performers
 - Uncle Rob Bundle
 - Dilly bag making
 - Native food plants
 - Wildlife Xposure
 - Kids activities
 - FREE BBQ
- And plenty more....

Coffee van will be on site for buying drinks

NAIDOC Week (4th - 11th July) celebrations are held across Australia to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself.

Local community celebrations during NAIDOC Week are encouraged and often organised by communities, government agencies, local councils, schools and workplaces.

For many years, the Australian Government has supported national NAIDOC celebrations as well as providing funding grants through the Regional Network to fund local celebrations.

Wherever you live, you can take part in NAIDOC Week celebrations. To find out about NAIDOC Week activities in your area, contact your nearest Regional Office.



GEELONG



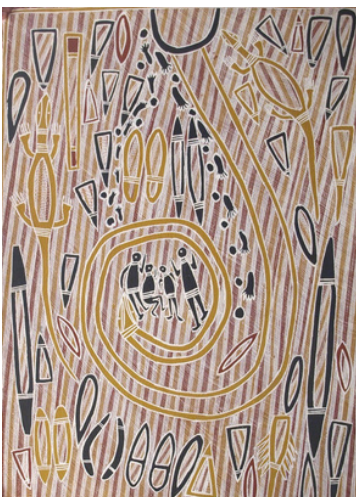
Geelong Connected Communities



Geelong One Fire



Examples of some Aboriginal artworks





Belmont Uniting Church July Roster 2021



Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
July 11	10.00am	Rev Ikani	J. Ferguson	L. Moss	E. Wood R. Bunting	L. McCann	G. Schneider	L. Rankin

Date	Communion	Flowers	Morning Tea
July 11	N/A	Silk Flowers	Heather McCann, Geoff & Janice Schneider

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
July 18	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	R Pearson	E. Richards	A. Merritt H. McCann	L. McCann	M. Richards	L. Rankin

Date	Communion	Flowers	Morning Tea
July 18	N/A	Silk Flowers	Fay & Wal Harper, Katrina Haas

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
July 25	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	J. Jeffers	D. Zuccaro	L. Moss L. Jackson	L. McCann	B. Jennings	L. Rankin

Date	Communion	Flowers	Morning Tea
July 25	N/A	Silk Flowers	Ray & Julie Ferguson, Muriel Bullock

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 Heavenly Father, You are our strength and protector. When we face challenges and adversity help us to place our trust in You. May we know the importance of taking our troubles and anxieties to You in prayer.

Dear God, we pray for people who are unwell and struggling with serious health issues. Comfort them in their time of need with Your abiding love and restore them to good health according to Your will.

Loving God, we pray for chaplains, carers and visitors who attend hospitals and nursing homes to reach out and care for people who are struggling with various health problems and loneliness. Help them to show genuine compassion and love; may they be a ray of sunshine to all they visit.

Peter Woods

Lectionary Readings

July 11 - Pentecost 7 2 Sam 6: 1 - 5, 12b - 19 Psalm 24 Eph 1: 3- 14 Mark 6: 14 - 29	July 18 - Pentecost 8 2 Sam 7: 1 - 14 Psalm 89: 20 - 37 Eph 2: 11 - 22 Mark 6: 30 - 34, 53 - 56	July 25 - Pentecost 9 2 Sam 11: 1 - 15 Psalm 14 Eph 3: 14 - 21 John 6: 1 - 21	August 1 - Pentecost 10 2 Sam 11: 26 - 12: 13a Psalm 51: 1 - 12 Eph 4: 1- 16 John 6: 24 - 35
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→ NOTICES ←

Happy 21st Birthday to Ben Vaitohi on 8th July.



Liz Main & Liz Moss had a great time in Alice Springs at St. Phillips College Work Party. They are well and due back early this weekend. There will be an article and photos next newsletter.

Loris Jackson is back from Sydney. She is well and has nearly completed isolation.

Doreen & John Stephens again thank us for our prayers and messages of concern. John is still in Epworth and has had surgery to help improve his breathing. Please keep them in your prayers.

Long time member Ralph Neylon passed away recently. His funeral was at King's on 2nd July.

NOTICES continued.....

Faith Sharing Group

The Faith Sharing Group shut down a few weeks' ago because of Covid restrictions on meetings in the church buildings. The Group will not meet over the school holiday period. We hope to recommence after the school holidays, that is on Tuesday July 13 at our usual 10am time.

SCONES, JAM & CREAM/SAVOURY OR PLAIN

Stay for morning tea next Sunday 18th July and enjoy scones, jam and cream/savoury or plain.

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 under reported. The Australian Government is providing some vaccine assistance.

BELMONT UNITING EVENING FELLOWSHIP

Our next meeting is Wednesday 28th July at 7.30pm when Raye Pearson will speak on her many overseas travels. Everyone is welcome and there will be a cuppa!



NEWS FLASH

As you are aware, the Church Council is constantly monitoring the Covid 19 situation and receives advice on current lockdown restrictions from both the government health advisors and Synod.

There will be Church (in-person) this Sunday morning 11th July.

Religious gatherings and ceremonies are allowed with density limits (1 person per 2 sqm.) in place but there is no longer an overall venue cap.

Face masks must be carried at all times and must be worn indoors.

You do not need to wear a mask in your own home or if a lawful exemption applies.

Thank you for your patience and continued care and support for each other in this fast-changing ministry context.

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: Gospel Mark 6.14–29

Call to Worship

Faithful God, this is the day and this is the time to bring our worship and to bring our minds seeking your truth, to bring our troubles and our happiness. Meet us here now and be with us as we listen to your word.

Opening Prayer

Great God of time and eternity, who inspired the prophets with your word and gave them the will to speak to your people; we gather in your name and seek your blessing on the mission of this community. May we listen and resolve, celebrate and sing, in the knowledge of your love and of your gracious calling. Make us prophets to discern your will, disciples to understand it and apostles to share it, inspired by your Spirit. Amen.

Sharing the Word

Jesus' ministry was being extended through the mission of the Twelve so it was not surprising that he came to the attention of Herod. The parallels between Jesus and John obviously touched a raw nerve with Herod – was this John come back to disturb him? Mark takes the opportunity to recount the death of John. We can see in Mark's account some parallels with stories in the Jewish Scriptures – e.g. Elijah and Ahab (1 Kings 17 and 18) and Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11). John did not just suffer the consequences of his bold preaching, he also fell foul of the sexual and power politics of the court. Herod, like many leaders before and after him, was willing to sacrifice others in order to maintain his own prestige, honour and power. Later we see Jesus caught up in the power politics of another court.



Prayers of intercession

The Lord calls us to follow. We walk in your strength, O Lord. We pray for situations where we struggle to follow Christ, offering them to God in the silence. *Silence*

The Lord calls us to follow. We walk in your strength, O Lord. We pray for our country and the places where God seems absent. *Silence*

We pray for our church, our home, our neighbourhood, and the struggles we have in centring our lives on the love of God. We offer into God's care the situations and people with whom we struggle. *Silence*

The Lord calls us to follow. We pray for areas of the world where Christians face persecution; and we pray for ourselves when we face situations where standing up for right is hard and painful. *Silence*

The Lord calls us to follow. We pray for people who find themselves alone, and for all who suffer, naming them before God and trusting in God's faithful love. *Silence* The Lord calls us to follow. Amen.

A personal prayer

Faithful God, you speak tenderly and true and hold our lives in yours. Whisper your truth into our hearts and give us courage in believing, that we might know and follow you, bearing witness to your name wherever you lead us, and wherever we will go. Amen.

Blessing

May the blessing of Almighty God ever surround you, the grace of the Lord Jesus go with you and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit fill your hearts. In love, and in the light and strength of God, we pursue our hope. Amen.

THANK YOU and THANK YOU and THANK YOU

On Sunday 27th June we had a very meaningful and joyous worship service to celebrate the 44th Anniversary of the formation of the Uniting Church. It was also our Thanksgiving Service to receive and dedicate the hundreds of items given for distribution to others. The service was followed by a special morning tea and time of fellowship.

The Mission and Outreach Committee express heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed in any way at all to this major outreach project. The response of our congregation members and friends was absolutely amazing and mind-blowing! At least 542 items were received, plus \$680.00 in cash. Handcrafted items ranged from pretty tiny beanies and booties for babies, to beautiful jumpers for toddlers, to 119 children's warm beanies, to 103 gorgeous quilts and knitted rugs - plus lots more! What a wonderful expression of our faith to share so generously and beautifully! As well as handcrafted items there were many purchased items, plus food! Here are the statistics:

Cottage by the Sea, Queenscliff received 274 items plus \$390.00;

Geelong Young Mums received 162 items;

Uniting, Grovedale received 80 items, plus \$290.00, plus a \$20.00 food voucher, plus 35kg of non-perishable food;

26 other quilts and rugs were taken to various Aged Care facilities.

As you can imagine, the gifts were all received most gratefully. From this generous response by our congregation and friends, many others beyond our church family will have the opportunity to be much warmer and cosier this winter. May we pray they will also know the hope, love and care which accompanies our gifts.

THANK YOU AGAIN, FOR A MOST GENEROUS AND TIMELY RESPONSE!

PS As a Lay Preacher, over the years I have visited many other congregations, city, rural and coastal, and I don't know of any other congregation which has such a generous and practical outreach ministry as we do. Well done Belmont Uniting Church! We are indeed a very special congregation.

Jean Murray, on behalf of the Mission and Outreach Committee.

