

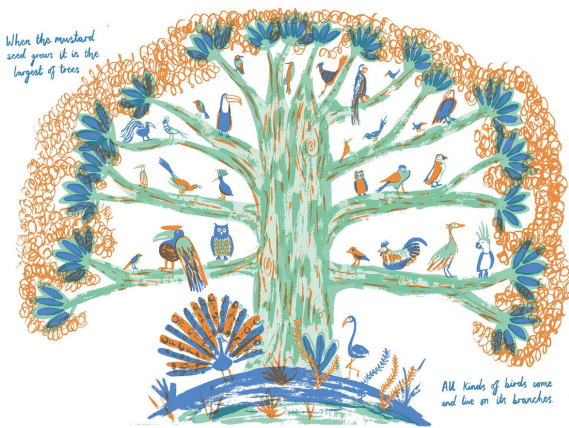


BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

13th June Weekly Newsletter 2021

2021 - THE YEAR OF HOPE

Hope – Sign of God at Work



Those of you who were farmers or have grown up on the land will enjoy the images that our Gospel reading for this Sunday brings. Jesus uses images of plants and trees in his parables. This is undoubtedly much more significant than simply borrowing from the scenery around him. He could have talked about carpentry and building, for instance, and yet he talks about plants and growth. The abiding image for the kingdom of God is one of growth, not construction. Growth is silent. Growth is progress. It continues day and night.

There is still a mystery and wonder, however around how a seed becomes a mature plant, even now that we understand DNA and photosynthesis. It is still astonishing that new life germinates, and we are still reliant on this natural process for our staple foods. All our skill at farming and food production is predicated on this natural force. These two parables suggest the kingdom of God also has this tremendous growing energy, similar to the emerging life of a seed. We seem to have little to contribute to the process beyond initially sowing the seed and perhaps taking care of the plant. The earth and the seed together produce mature plants, and this happens whether the grower is awake or asleep. The mustard seed grows to become a huge tree, and its very life has a purpose – to provide room for the birds in its shade (reminiscent of the tree in Ezekiel 17.23). This is what the kingdom of God is like, growing mysteriously and wonderfully. After noticing the sign in our notice board that says '2021 – A Year of Hope', I overheard one passer-by asking another, 'How can 2021 be a year of hope amid the lockdown? If I were to answer the question, I would probably say, firstly, hope makes 2021 bearable to live through even in the lockdown, and secondly, hope is the sign and assurance of God working in the world despite our effort.

These two parables of the seed remind us of God's mysterious energy secretly at work in the world – sometimes in partnership with the Church, other times, working creatively despite our effort to produce the growth of God's kingdom. May you discover in your life this week the divine and mysterious seed of love, hope, grace, and peace that God has planted in you. May you discover God's purpose for all that he has sown in your life.





Belmont Uniting Church June / July Roster 2021



| Date | Time | Leader | Leader's Steward | Readers | Greeters & Ushers | PowerPoint | PA Operator | Organist |
|---------|---------|------------|------------------|---------|----------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| June 20 | 10.00am | Rev. Ikani | Bev. Dickie | E. Wood | R. Ferguson J. Ferguson | B. Vaitohi | B. Jennings | A. Ingles |

| Date | Communion | Flowers |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| June 20 | N/A | J. Kelly |

| Date | Time | Leader | Leader's Steward | Readers | Greeters & Ushers | PowerPoint | PA Operator | Organist |
|---------|---------|------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| June 27 | 10.00am | Rev. Ikani | G. Coomber | N. Phillips | J. Ferguson C. Schaller | B. Vaitohi | D. Zucarro | C. Collins |

| Date | Communion | Flowers |
|---------|-----------|-------------|
| June 27 | N/A | E. Richards |

| Date | Time | Leader | Leader's Steward | Readers | Greeters & Ushers | PowerPoint | PA Operator | Organist |
|--------|---------|------------|------------------|----------|----------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| July 4 | 10.00am | Rev. Ikani | L. Jackson | G. Allen | D. Stephens R. Ferguson | L. McCann | B. Jones | L. Rankin |

| Date | Communion | Flowers |
|--------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| July 4 | R & J Ferguson B & S Jennings | Silk Flowers |

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.

Morning Tea Roster

June 20th

Moana, Mona Lisa & Siale Vaitohi

June 27th

Aileen & Ray Bunting, Elizabeth Wood

July 4th

Nola & Peter Woods, Barbara Pink

PLEASE NOTE

There will be no Church this Sunday morning 13th June and further changes as part of the Restrictions as set down by the Victorian Government. (Refer to pages 3 & 5)

Prayer Points For the Week

Dear Lord, we pray that You will draw close to those who are struggling to cope with life. In particular, we think of people faced with serious depression, gambling problems, alcohol and drug addiction and difficult family relationships.

Dear Heavenly Father, at times troubles and distractions preoccupy our thoughts and trouble our souls. When we are worried help us to live courageously, placing our hope and faith in You, knowing that You love us and will not forsake us.

Dear God, we pray for the Leprosy Mission and the wonderful work it undertakes in providing medical care and treatment for people affected by leprosy. Bless the doctors, nurses and volunteers who reach out with Christian love and dedication to help these people.

Peter Woods

BELMONT UNITING EVENING FELLOWSHIP

Advance Notices

Hopefully our next meeting is June 23 for 12 noon lunch at Moorabool Valley Chocolates.

Please confirm your attendance to Loris on 0418334994 by June 16th in the morning.

Please all meet at Church at 11:20am to car pool.

Wednesday 28th July - Raye Pearson will speak on her many travels.

Lectionary Readings

June 13 - Pentecost 3

1 Sam 15: 34 - 16:13

Psalm 20

2 Cor 5: 6 - 10

Mark 4: 26 - 34

June 20 - Pentecost 4

1 Sam 17: 32 - 49

Psalm 9: 9 - 20

2 Cor 6: 1 - 13

Mark 4: 35 - 41

June 22 - UCA Anniversary

2 Cor 30: 1 - 9

Psalm 127

Eph 2: 19 - 22

John 17: 1 - 11

June 27 - Pentecost 5

2 Sam 1: 1, 17 - 27

Psalm 130

2 Cor 8: 7 - 15

Mark 5: 21 - 43

→ NOTICES ←

NEWS FROM THE MISSION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

OUR WEEKLY COLLECTION OF FOOD FOR UNITING is cancelled this Sunday 13th June due to Covid restrictions and will re-commence when we return to Sunday worship in our church building.

OUR ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE will be held At 10 AM ON SUNDAY, 27th JUNE, when we will dedicate handmade and purchased goods, food and clothing for various organizations. This service will also celebrate the Anniversary of the Uniting Church. Your donations will support:

COTTAGE BY THE SEA - beanies, winter clothes and pyjamas for girls and boys sizes 8-16, socks and undies all sizes, toys, card games, colouring pencils, roll-on deodorant.

GEELONG YOUNG MUMS - clothing for babies and toddlers.

KALKEE AND AGED CARE FACILITIES - quilts and rugs.

UNITING (at Grovedale) - track suit pants all sizes, disposable nappies.

Please note: all clothing is to be NEW.

Clothing and donations can be brought to the church on Saturday, 26th June from 10 am to 11 am, or prior to the service on Sunday, 27th June.

If you prefer, cash can be placed in the red buckets in church foyer on 27th June for Food Vouchers (not for cigarettes and alcohol) for distribution at Uniting, or clothing for Cottage by the Sea.

IF THERE IS A COVID LOCKDOWN in place on the weekend of 26th and 27th June, we will have a DRIVE-THRU on the Saturday, from 10 to 11 am, to receive your donations of clothing and cash.

Please only support in whatever way you wish. There is no pressure - you are simply being given the opportunity. The response is up to you!!!

THANK YOU!

Members of the Mission and Outreach Committee

Jean Murray Ph 52 43 4103

IMPORTANT NEWS

As you may now be aware, the Victorian Government has announced updated news re COVID-19 for Regional Victoria from 11th June.

As a result, please note the following changes that are applicable to us: Open for religious gatherings, with up to 75 people per venue and a density limit of one person per 4 square metres. (There will be NO in-person service this Sunday due to our membership number).

Sunday Worship ONLINE 13/06/2021 at 10.00 am:

Our service will either be available live on Zoom or recorded and be made available on our YouTube page and website. Here are the links:

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6mXx6ryplAegGlrhv3W2Lg>

Website: <https://buc.unitingchurch.org.au>

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

News from Traralgon - The desk contacted the Aitkens and they are not in the flood zones. Also heard Geoff is 'chief cook & bottle washer' for ten weeks as Liz dislocated and badly fractured her ankle and now has pins and plates helping her heal. Our love and prayers to both.



Worship At Home

Acknowledgement of Country

Today, as we gather in our homes, 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: 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

Call to Worship

Here we are Lord, gathering to meet with you in worship. Come amongst us, by your Spirit, as we pray, sing, listen and share. Open our hearts to fall in love with your creation again, O God.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, Creator of all that we can see, feel, and hear, we thank you for being in our lives, for sharing our fears and our hopes, for loving us as we are, not who others think we should be, not who we wish we were, but who we are, your beloved children, created in your image to be in this time and this place. Help us to be like you, to see the good in those around us and not to judge others, guide us as we try to live a life that honours you and makes the lives of those around us better every day. Amen.

During this season working through 1 and 2 Samuel there are some major jumps in the lectionary sequence. In this section, we'll give you a snapshot of what has happened in the intervening chapters. Last week the Israelites were crying out for a king. Samuel's family were not up to the job of leadership, and the elders agreed that a king would fit the mark. We hear that God has other thoughts which Samuel relates back to the people. Yet the people have their way. Remember this is a theological reflection on history, written a long time later by people trying to understand God's dealings with them.

Their new king certainly looked the part. Saul was a handsome, tall, well-built man. He came from a lowly tribe but nonetheless fits the bill, one would think. Looks are not everything, however. Saul is courageous and leads the Israelites to many victories, but the depiction in 1 Samuel is also of a man who likes to do things his own way, disobedient to God.

He ignored his own son Jonathan's careful plans, made foolish curses in the heat of the moment that only hurt his own people and his own ambitions, and he neglected his own soldiers. Saul's time was up. The monarchy experiment in the hands of

Saul was not a success. The blessing of God upon Saul's reign was retracted, "I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused my command." The time is right for change. How do you cope with change? How do you know when it is the right time for any change in your life? What has learned from the ever-changing reality of this covid time?

Prayers of intercession

God of wondrous things, we thank you for the variety of peoples and species that dwell on our planet. For all the languages we hear, the customs we see and the faiths we encounter. We pray your blessing on this richly diverse world and ask you to help us.

In particular, help us to better consider how you would have us show your love to each person made in your image and to know how to act in support when they are faced with having to live with or flee from war or famine.

God of steadfast love, help us to pay attention to the changes that are happening around us. Keep us alert to injustice even when it seems insignificant, because it isn't to those close to it, and help us to stand for what is right. Help us to watch out for the new idea and the risk-taker who might be planting seeds that we are called to water. Watch over us in our homes, our community and in our world that we continue to live according to your will and promise. We pray these in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who taught us to pray saying, Our Father in heaven,... Amen.



Greetings all,

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. The latest update on the restrictions as of 11.59 pm June 10, states that all religious gatherings must not exceed 75 people. We have had more than 100 people attended our worship services lately. Because we cannot accommodate everyone under the allowable number, our Sunday worship services will continue to be offered online until further notice. Thank you for your patience and continued care and support for each other in this fast-changing ministry context.

As I will be on Study leave next week, you are invited to join our friends from St Luke's Highton for their 9.30 am online service. Rev Paul Stephens and the people of St Luke's congregation will welcome you for worship and fellowship. Upon my return on the 22 of June, our normal worship service will resume on the 27th of June.

Sunday 20th June

St Luke's Highton Sunday Service: Live streaming on this link -

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJAL8289CyXTVBd-Y8dvT6Q>

Minister's Study Leave: Tuesday 15-Monday 21 of June

Some of you may not have been aware that not only I have gone back to school to study for a graduate course in Executive Leadership, I have also been studying through our periods of lockdown as well. The last couple of years has been a very interesting time juggling assignments, lockdown, passing of my parents and ministry. So, I am so looking forward to handing in my final assignment which is due in late July.

Depending of course if I pass the course or not, when the opportunity presents, I wish to share with you some of the things I have learnt from this course.

Please note that I will be away on Study Leave but I am contactable by the phone for any emergency matters. I look forward to seeing you the following week.

Church Council Go Online!

We celebrated this week our Church Council first online zoom meeting. Our Chairperson Bill Jennings and Secretary Glen Coomber were so proficient in the conduct of their roles that the whole meeting went for just over an hour. With only some minor technical glitches, we all said with one voice, that not even future lockdown will stop our Church Council from meeting. The joy of the night was the Chairperson welcoming Ms Loris Jackson who joined us from NSW in her spare time. So, not even distance and busy family commitments will stop your Church Council members from working hard.

Welcome Mat!

Welcome Mat is back hooray!!! So great to see our Welcome Mat members enjoying Fun and Fellowship on Friday morning. If you know anyone in the community who wish to attend, please speak with Fay Harper.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Sunday School Anniversary Services, 1976

It was decided to re-introduce the Sunday School Anniversary -Services in order to encourage the children to sing, hopefully to improve the standard of their singing and to share the Christian message with their parents, friends, and members of the

congregation by way of the songs that they have learned during the year.



I believe that this was certainly achieved at all of the services. What a wonderful opening to our services we had with the cantata, "Finders, Keepers", which was presented by the teachers and children of the Intermediate and the Junior Departments on Sunday, October 31st. The singing was excellent and I'm sure that everyone present was uplifted spiritually by the message which the children conveyed. This is clearly evident in the beautiful song from the cantata, "Will You Let Jesus?"

Will you let Jesus come into your heart,
now that you know you can have a new start?
No need to wonder what others may say;
You know that He is the truth and the Way.
Will you let Jesus come into your heart?
Let Him forgive you; new life He'll impart.
True love He'll give you, so full and so free.
Will you let Jesus? Just try Him and see.



Special thanks must go to Mrs. Lorraine Rankin, the musical director of the cantata, Mrs. Heather Mitchell, the organist, and Mr. Brian Denmead the guitarist.

The second of our Anniversary Services was conducted by the Nursery, Kindergarten and Primary Departments on Sunday, November 7th. It was a real joy to see and hear the young children as they participated in the service.

Our Sunday School Anniversary culminated with a Youth Tea which was attended by approximately eighty young people who undoubtedly enjoyed the meal, the activities and the fellowship. I would particularly like to thank Mr. John Rankin, the leaders of the Youth Departments and the band or helpers for organizing the Youth Tea and making it such a success. The tea was followed by a Youth Service which was led by members of the God Squad from Melbourne. Although this service was conducted somewhat differently from what we have experienced before, I believe that the God Squad spoke to us honestly, sincerely, and frankly, in a manner which should have shaken us all out of a state of spiritual lethargy.

Finally, I would like to thank most sincerely everyone who assisted in any way in the organisation of the Anniversary Services.

Peter Woods , General Superintendent

THE HOPE CONTINUES

Did you see Dr Harry's Animal Encounters on TV on 22 May featuring two returned Army Veterans who had served with the Australian Army in Afghanistan?

Suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, they connected with Young Diggers to help them overcome the trauma and depression they were suffering. Each man was given a trained assistance dog (free of charge) plus the opportunity to meet weekly for a BBQ, a chat and ongoing support. As a result the men now have a renewed sense of purpose and hope. Their lives have truly been transformed! Their dogs are with them 24 hours every day.

It was really good to see Dr Harry acknowledging the life-changing work of Young Diggers. The beautiful, well-trained dogs had been rescued from the Dog Pound, so they also had a life-changing experience!

As a result of our 2019 Church Fair we were able to donate \$3,843 to the continuing work of Young Diggers. It thrills me to know that our gift, which was the result of much hard work by so many members of our congregation at the 2019 Fair, enables Young Diggers to still bring friendship, life and hope to those suffering from PTSD.

Our 2021 theme - "The Year of Hope" - is alive and well! Praise be to God!

Jean Murray