



# BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

4th April Weekly Newsletter 2021

## 2021 - THE YEAR OF HOPE

**The story of our life turns, when we are known and called by name. John 20: 16**

*2021 Moderator's Easter Message.*

Back in 1992 (and here I'm revealing my age), I heard the Red Hot Chilli Peppers' song 'Under the Bridge' for the first time. It was during Lent, just before Easter. I'm not sure if I can express quite well enough in words how deeply it struck me. It wasn't just the words; it wasn't just the music; it wasn't just the deeply personal backstory of Anthony Kiedis who wrote the song. It was also my own story at that time, and of friends and people I loved. My story was very different to Kiedis' story, but there was a connection all the same. I was living with my own life challenges back then – as all of us do from time to time.

Somehow, all of those things came together, and the song touched deep into my own life experience. It was emotional and visceral and personal.

Kiedis originally wrote this song as a poem, expressing his experience of isolation and despondency – in a very urban-West-Coast-American kind of way. He wrote of being drawn back into a memory of a not-long-past, absolute-lowest-point in his life, during a time of heroin addiction. That low point was when he was literally and metaphorically under a bridge, abandoning the ones who loved him in favour of the next score, and utterly alone.

A few years later, he was in a different place. But the memory of that pain was still alive and easily brought to the surface. As he remembers, he cries out from the depths of his soul:

*I don't wanna ever feel, like I did that day.  
Take me to the place I love, take me all the way.*

Kiedis was singing about re-lived pain and alienation, and the 'place' he wanted to be instead: with friends and love and trust in his life. Can he go back to remember the way he felt that day when he was under the bridge? No! That was a way he never wants to feel again!

If you don't know this song, you can easily do an internet search, watch a video clip, and listen to Kiedis sing this poem of his heart and soul.

Just a warning though: the music style and images of the Red Hot Chilli Peppers performing this song may not be quite your cup of tea. But music and the stories they carry have a way of touching us, even when the musical style isn't ordinarily our cup of tea. So maybe it's worth a listen ... again ... or for the first time.

This particular song has somehow managed to cross boundaries of musical taste, capturing the imagination of people who would never normally listen to alternative '90s American rock. Maybe the music that calls to your soul comes from Gregorio Allegri, or Gurrumul, or The Beatles, Ayub Ogada, Billie Eilish, Arvo Pärt, Aretha Franklin, or the beloved hymns of your particular culture and history? There's something about the way that music, poetry and stories can touch into the experiences of our lives, even when they are from other people and lives very different to our own. They can still give light to turning points in our own experience. And in these graced moments, God can open up our hope and the possibility of a different reality, and pull us in to an alternative way of living and being.



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Topic: Holy Week Devotions: Monday 29 – Saturday 3rd of April 2021 - Every evening at 7.00pm.

<https://zoom.us/j/94092469280?pwd=dnV6VlVhKzY0WERaU0lmc0N3bkRZUT09>

Meeting ID: 940 9246 9280 - Passcode: 1234



## Belmont Uniting Church March/April Roster 2021



Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Apr 2	10.00am	Rev. Ikani Vaitohi	H. McCann	C. Rankin	J. Oman V. Matthewson	L. McCann	B. Jones	L. Rankin

Date	Communion	Flowers
Apr 2	N/A	B. Pullin

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Apr 4	10.00am	Rev. Ikani Vaitohi	A. Merritt	R. Pearson	R. Buckwell T. Jepson	L. McCann	D. Zucarro	C. Collins

Date	Communion	Flowers
Apr 4	R. Ferguson J. Ferguson T. Yates H. McCann	B. Pullin

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Apr 11	10.00am	TBA	G. Coomber	E. Richards M. Richards	L. Moss T. Yate	L. McCann	G. Schneider	L. Rankin

Date	Communion	Flowers
Apr 11	N/A	A. Merritt

**If for any reason you are unable to attend your rostered duty, please endeavour to swap with anyone & contact the worship leader**

### FAITH SHARING

The Faith Sharing Group is recommencing (after the pandemic shut down) on Tuesday 13th April and hoping for new participants. It meets from 10am until 11.30am every Tuesday in the church hall to discuss the lectionary readings set for the week. It is an opportunity to learn, grow and share with others in the church. You would be warmly welcomed.



### Coffee after Church Service



If you would like to order a take away coffee or a cup of hot chocolate this Sunday, you will need to write your name and what you wish to order on a piece of paper to hand in when you arrive.

Cafe CBD will prepare your order to be ready by the end of our worship service.



### Presbytery Pastoral Care Seminars

16 Apr - Friday 9:30am-12:30pm  
22 Apr - Thursday 6:30pm - 9:30pm  
*Speak with Ikani for details*



## Prayer Points For the Week

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank Jesus for the courage and commitment which made Him go to the Cross; for the obedience which made Him accept Your will and for the magnitude of Your love for all people.

Loving God, we thank You for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He conquered death and rose from the grave. Help us to know that He is with us always, even to the end of the world and that nothing can separate us from His eternal love.

Dear Lord, help us to know that Jesus came to lift us out of negative thinking, guilt and shame. He came to take our sin to the Cross to defeat it. We need to appreciate and be thankful for His sacrifice, but we need to live in the joy of the resurrection.

*Peter Woods*



### Belmont Uniting Evening Fellowship

**Advance Notices - 7:30pm Wednesday 28th April**



Guest Speaker - Ian Henricus  
"Cycling in France" (All Welcome)

7:30pm Wednesday 26th May  
Guest Speaker - Glen Coomber

"Calligraphy & Candles" (All Welcome)



## Lectionary Reading

April 2 - Good Friday  
Is 52: 13 - 53: 12  
Psalm 22  
Heb 10: 16 - 25  
Jn 18: 1 - 19:42

April 3 - Holy Saturday  
Jod 14: 1 - 4  
Psalm 31: 1 - 4, 15 - 16  
1 Pet 4: 1 - 6  
Mt 27: 57 - 66

April 4 - Easter Day  
Acts 10: 34 - 43  
Psalm 118: 1 - 2, 14 - 24  
1 Cor 15: 1 - 11  
Jn 20: 1 - 18

April 4 - Easter Evening  
Is 25: 6 - 9  
Psalm 114  
1 Cor 5: 6b - 8  
Lk 24: 13 - 49



**Jesus entering Jerusalem**



**The Trial**

# *hosanna!* From the Palms to the open Tomb



**The Crucifixion**



**The Resurrection**

(from page 1)

I think there's something like this in the way John's gospel tells the story of Mary in the garden while it was still dark. She is meeting a person she thinks is the gardener, because her tears and sorrow and grief overwhelm her vision. This story is emotional, it's visceral, it's embodied, it's personal. It touches into our own pain, to times where we too could say, *'I don't wanna ever feel, like I did that day.'*

But the story goes on. It tells us about a glimpse of hope that emerges, revealing that something else is possible. And it all turns on someone Mary thought was a stranger, who calls her by name.

The person she thinks is a stranger, speaks to her, "Mary!"

And in this moment, Mary recognises he is no stranger to her at all; and she is no stranger to him.

I wonder when you have experienced something like this? Perhaps there was someone you thought didn't know you from a bar of soap, someone you thought couldn't possibly have cared less about you. And then they called you by name. And in that moment you discovered: 'this person knows who I am!'

How does it make us feel? ... when we thought we were an anonymous, insignificant, faceless person in the crowd? ... and discover, instead, we are someone known by name?

Being known and called by name makes us into people considered by others as being of value and of worth. It means we matter to someone else. It means we are part of a community that considers us an integral part. It signifies that we are cared about, that someone else knows whether we are there or not, and maybe, even, how we are going.

Being known and called by name, tells us we belong here in this community. It pulls us into the life of this community. Being known and called by name includes us, holds us and enfolds us. It gives us a place and a home where we know we belong.

This story of Mary and the risen Jesus, told to us in John's gospel, tells us that it is not just a distant cosmic force, or disembodied principle of goodness, that we believe in or proclaim.

This story of Mary and the risen Jesus, tells us a human-divine story, a story of real life, a story of life lived in God and God living in and with us. This risen Jesus calling Mary's name, is calling our name as well. This risen Jesus touches in to our own real life-saving experience of what it means to be known personally by God, and to know we belong and are cared about for who we are.

In this story, we know our pain, our longing, our hope and our life.

In this story, we hear the One of God, who knows us and speaks to us by our name.

In this story, we are pulled deeply into the life of the beloved community of Jesus, where we are known and called by name.

In this story, we are called into the life of the risen Christ – to know and call each other by name – no longer strangers to each other.

As we emerge ever more from this time of pandemic, we have been asking ourselves how we can connect more deeply into our wider communities. How can we be real, embodied and connected communities, not just with our own preferred group of friends we already know, but wider and deeper and beyond?

Maybe it's as simple and as difficult as coming to know each other by name? ... really knowing each other by name?

May we be shaped, formed and filled with the life of the risen Christ who calls us by name; for in Christ, we are no longer strangers, but friends.

Rev. Denise Liersch



#### PLEASE NOTE

Good Friday Service: 2 April - 10.00am (in-church)  
Easter Sunday Service: 4 April - 10.00am (in-church)

