WELCOME BELMONT UNITING CHURCH

3rd October Weekly Newsletter 2021

2021 - THE YEAR OF HOPE

'Season of Creation 2021-

Unity of Christians

If you have ever played any team sports, you would be familiar with the saying, "There is no 'I' in team". I have played many team sports in my time, including rugby union and rugby league, touch footy, soccer, and, yes, Australian Football. In fact, it was the first time I heard of this saying from our football coach, who was trying to explain how important my position was to the team's success.

He explained that the primary responsibility of a ruckman is to provide contest in the ruck and make sure I tapped the ball to our guys and the job is done. Let the others do the rest. I later found out that I scored the ruckman position only because there is no other position suited to my level of fitness.

Although I was keenly aware of how little I contributed to the team success, each game, the coach reminded me of how important to the team that I get to every ruck, even walk if I have to, just get in there and be part of the team.

What I am most impressed with, amongst many others about our life as a community of faith, is the way we are – a team. Our journey through this time of pandemic has been difficult. We have faced many and varied obstacles along the way. But we stand shoulder to shoulder, offering each other the love and grace deserving of being disciples of Jesus Christ. Our ministry extends well beyond local needs to national and international mission fields. Despite the many challenges we face as a community of faith, we continue to remain faithful as the Body of Christ, acting as a sign and foretaste of God's kingdom to come.

Writing from prison, Paul, in his letter to the community in Ephesus was addressing a young church deep in conflict in all manner of things. Paul rejects the idea that conflict stems from their diversity. Instead, he emphasised that the diversity of the body and how it is composed of many different, varied parts, each with its unique part to play. The Body of Christ, the Church, is like this as well, with each called to a unique service to the whole.

Paul urged them to live and behave in a way that fits people who have received the same Spirit. Although they share and are empowered by the same Spirit of God, each one of them has been given their unique abilities. Some are given the gift to be great teachers, others great writers or speakers. However, each of these abilities and different gifts contributes in an intricate way to the whole function of the body.

Friends, we are witnessing an unprecedented level of divisions in our community. It presents us a unique opportunity to be witnessing to the unity we all find in Christ – unity in diversity. May I encourage you to reach out in prayer and in love to those who may not feel this spirit of oneness in diversity. An increasing number of our members are no longer able to maintain the level of connections to online worship and other online community engagements. This month we celebrate the importance of our seniors in our life together. A text or a phone call to our friends in Retirement villages, Nursing Homes and hospitals would assure them that they are very much an important part of the Body of Christ. Let us make this month a time to witness to the unity we share in the Body of Christ as Paul says:

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:4-6)



Latest on our Sunday Worship Services - more details on page 3

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.

Prayer of Approach

Lord, you sustain all things, holding creation in your hands. We can only wonder at the power of your Word.

We praise you for all you have made, but most of all we praise you for making yourself known to us through Jesus. Hallelujah! Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Lord, there are so many ways in which we can hurt one another and grieve your Holy Spirit. Forgive us when we have treated our lives, and the lives of others, in ways that devalue us and them, not appreciating the gift that life is to us. Forgive us when we hurt those closest to us, when we do not appreciate their worth. Forgive us when, even today, we have lashed out at someone else, or undermined someone's confidence or joy. Help us, Lord, we pray – wipe away all bitterness and resentment from our hearts, and bring us into a stronger relationship with you and with those around us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Notes on the Bible readings Genesis 2.18-24, Hebrews 1.1-4; 2.5-12, Mark 10.2-16

In the Genesis reading, God expresses man's fundamental need for companionship (v.18), and creates a 'helper' (the Hebrew word does not imply a subordinate) in the form of a woman. 'Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' is the Bible's first love poem and it conveys a bond so strong that if broken it would be like tearing out part of one's own body.

The reading from Hebrews quotes Psalm 8: 'what are mortals that you care for them?' Jesus, through his solidarity with us in suffering and death, has lifted up humanity, so that we can be called his brothers and sisters and be sanctified by God.

When asked about divorce, Jesus does not condemn it outright, but uses Genesis to reiterate God's will, rather than the Mosaic law, which allowed for the weakness of human relationships. To 'become one flesh' in marriage is the highest calling of men and women, and is fundamental to God's created order. Jesus' words,

What God has joined together, let no one separate', are still quoted in today's marriage service. However, when faced with difficult moral questions, 'black and white' rules cannot always be applied to complex situations – compassion and understanding are needed.

People bring their children to Jesus for a blessing as he is a holy man. He then rebukes the disciples for turning them away, and says that receiving the kingdom of God 'as a little child' is the only way to enter it.

A personal prayer

Lord God, help me to be a blessing. Let me not be focused on seeking others' approval, but instead to reach out in love. May love become my default setting, so that, every day, my responses will become more gracious, more compassionate, and more like you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Live your faith
Be aware of the people you love
and who love you. Give thanks
to God for this gift each day,
and ask for God's blessing on
your relationships.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What is your favourite image of love?
- Love is a word. What does it mean in practice?
- ▶ When is it hard to love?



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Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	<u>Organist</u>
Oct 3	10.00an	n Rev. Ikani	H. McCann	C. Rankin	R. Bunting	L. McCann	B. Jones	C. Collins
					R. Pearson		-	
Oct 3	t 3 Communion		Flowers		Morning Tea			
	R. & J. Ferguson		B. Coomber		L. & C. Rankin			
	T. Yates				A. Merritt			
H. McCann								
Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Oct 10	10.00an	n Rev. Ikani	A. Merritt	R. Pearson	R. & R. Buckwell	L. McCann	D. Zucarro	L. Rankin
Oct 10	Oct 10 Communion		Flowers		Morning Tea			
N/A		B. Coomber		N. & P. Woods				
				B. Pink				
Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Oct 17	10.00ar	n Rev. Ikani	G. Coomber	E. Richards	L. Moss	L. McCann	G. Schneider	L. Rankin
					T. Yates			
Oct 17	Com	munion	Flowers		Morning Tea			
	1	N/A	B. Couper		R. & J. Jeffers			
			-		R. Pearson			
Thank you to these willing people for keeping our Church services going. If you need to swap please endeavour to do s							ur to do so	

Thank you to these willing people for keeping our Church services going. If you need to swap please endeavour to do so or if finding it difficult phone Julie 0418996592

Prayer Points For the Week

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your goodness and for Your faithfulness in our lives. Thank You that we do not have to be snared by negative thoughts and each day may we learn to trust You more and more.

Loving God, we know that You value our prayers and may we understand that it is important to pray not only when we need something, but in times of gratitude and praise as well. We praise You for Your wisdom, compassion and love as we journey through life.

Dear God, as followers of Jesus Christ we are challenged daily to share His love with others. May we walk each day with Him, obey the commandments found in the Bible and help us to be worthy ambassadors for our Lord and Saviour.

Peter Woods

Lectionary Readings

Oct 3 - Pentecost 19 Jb 1: 1: 2: 1 - 10	Oct 10 - Pentecost 20 Jb 23: 1 - 9, 16 - 17	Oct 17 - Pentecost 21 Jb 38: 1 - 7, (34 - 41)	Oct 24 - Pentecost 22 Jb 42: 1 - 6, 10 - 17
Psalm 26	Psalm 22: 1 - 15	Psalm 104: 1 - 9, 24 - 35	Psalm 34: 1 - 8, (19 - 22)
Heb 1: 1 - 4, 2: 5 - 12	Heb 4: 12- 16	Heb 5: 1- 10	Heb 7: 23- 28
Mark 8: 27 - 38	Mark 10: 17 - 31	Mark 10: 35 - 45	Mark 10: 46 - 52

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There will be an online worship service for this Sunday October 3rd. You are welcome to join together at the same time of 10.00 am and afterwards for a chat if you wish using this zoom link:

https://zoom.us/j/99984774012?pwd=Ky85NGtwbnZqblh2YzFGNDdDZEM1QT09 Meeting ID: 999 8477 4012 - Passcode: 1234

Online worship services will be available to be viewed via our website by 10.00am each Sunday. https://buc.unitingchurch.org.au



This week we pray for all who have lost loved ones. Especially we pray for Doreen Stephens and families, Marlene Wilson and families and the families of Pauline Davies.

Uphold them all dear Lord.

Flowers by Pearlyn

They have no mouth, but seem to speak a thousand words so mild and meek.

They have no eyes, but seem to see and bury thoughts into me.

They have no ears, but seem to hear all my cries, my every tear.

They have no arms, but seem to pat when with worries my heart is flat.



They have no feet, but seem to walk along with me in my dreams and talk.

They, I know, are the flowers so nice that spread their fragrance a million miles.

Grow a few and then you'll know how your life is fresh and new.

With a smile so broad, I thank my God, whose work to imagine is really too hard.

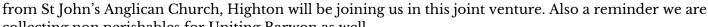
Photos by Lorraine Leitch

"WATCH THIS SPACE – OCTOBER FUNDRAISER FOR BUSHIKORI"





Each week during October, as you place donations in you "collection jar" whilst enjoying you morning tea, you will be able to read articles in the Newsletter about the Bushikori Christian Centre in Uganda, building up to the "big day" on Saturday 6th November, when you will have the opportunity to give your financial support through a Drive-Through Event at Belmont Uniting Church. We are delighted that friends



collecting non perishables for Uniting Barwon as well.

The Bushikori Christian Centre is located in a rural village near Mbale, Uganda, East Africa and consists mainly of a maternity clinic, Joshua Primary School (grades 1-7), Christ-centred education, community library and administration offices. The committed Ugandan staff at Bushikori provide a much-needed service to an impoverished family community, particularly the vulnerable children who have been orphaned largely through the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to think beyond ourselves and the impact COVID 19 has had on our own lives, and to think of others and to reach out in a very practical way.





PLEASE KEEP ON WATCHING THIS SPACE FOR FURTHER NEWS DURING OCTOBER

From the Mission and Outreach Committee and Sue and Bill Jennings (Friends of Bushikori Committee)

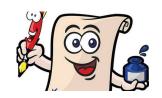
THE LEITCH CHRONICLES

Earth Days: We don't have to wait until April 22 to celebrate the earth. Pick any day to give the needs of our home planet some extra attention. Spend as much time outside as possible, enjoying the beauty of the natural world. Take a rubbish bag with you for the day and pick up rubbish as you go. Walk or take public transportation, buy from local businesses, and see if you can create no waste for any. If you're feeling ambitious, roll up your sleeves and replace your regular fluorescent ones and weatherize your windows. Whatever you decide to do, be sure to indulge at the end of the day with a feast of locally grown food. Who knows? Earth Day could become a whole lifestyle.

Lorraine Leitch

ROAST LAMB - Exodus 12:8

from the Editor's desk



a Biblical Menulll

SOUP - BARLEY - 2 Samuel 17:28

BEAN & LENTIL - Genesis 25:34

ENTRÉE - BROILED FISH - Luke 24:42 SAVOURY MEAT - Genesis 27: 4

VEGETABLES

CUCUMBERS, LEEKS, ONIONS & GARLIC - Numbers 11: 5

SWEETS - ICED MELON - Numbers 11:5

CHEESE & HONEY - 2 Samuel 17:29

FRUIT - APPLES -Proverbs 25:11, POMEGRANATES - 1 Samuel 14:2

GRAPES & FIGS - Matthew 7:16,

NUTS - ALMONDS - Jeremiah 1:11

BEVERAGES - WATER - Matthew 10; 42, Milk - 1 Corinthians 3: 2

- WINE - John 2: 11

Let them come to me



Mark 10.2-16

When the Pharisees test Jesus on his knowledge of the law, he asks if they know why that law was given. He refers all the way back to God's creation of a perfect world, to highlight how we fall short of that perfection in our relationships. When the disciples apply their own judgement to who can come to him, Jesus again reminds them of how God's kingdom works.

Now read Mark 10.2-16 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Have you noticed how often Jesus answers a question with another question? He wants his followers to think about relationships as God does. He stresses the importance of taking a different point of view by saying that children who had no status at all in society - are better able to understand God. What question might you ask Jesus about this?



'Let the children come to me.' **Ask yourself:** Why does it matter that Jesus said this?



Why do people - of any age - fall out and argue? Often it is because we each pull in our own direction, rather than sharing what we have and what we can do. Listen to the song 'On giants' shoulders'. https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=ZlpoLqGYv1Y It speaks of how even a giant can be helped by a small child. Each one of us, of any age or size, has value, which is best revealed when we work together. How can we be more understanding and accepting of each other?





Jesus invited children to come to him and he gave them a hug. Not all relationships go so well. When faced with loss, by death or a family breakup, the long-term effect on all involved can be overlooked. In Thame, Oxfordshire, there is a public Youth Memorial, to remember young people who have died. It is alongside the town's war memorial for soldiers. Research online what other commemorative monuments there are to children, either individuals or those who were involved in a historic event. Consider if there is a fair balance of remembrance for all ages.



Get out those old family photo albums of previous generations. Before the days of camera phones and easy access to photography, some families only had photos that were taken at a studio, with painted backgrounds, showing a 'perfect' family. Do the styles and settings of your old pictures say anything about how the role of children in family and society has changed in your lifetime?



What can children do better than adults? Until about 150 years ago in Britain, children were sent up chimneys to clean them, because they were small enough to do the job. Play a game of all-age hide and seek. Why are adults easier to find - it may not be only because of their physical size, but also their lack of imagination!



The writer Max Lucado describes a Brazilian tradition where each morning a child asks a parent for a blessing before they go out. It gave him new insight into the importance and power of blessing each other. Adults and children alike need to receive blessing. Lucado offers 31 days of blessings on his website (https://maxlucado.com/31days-of-blessing/). Download and print some or all of these out and cut them up. Within a household

you could share them out. Each day, use one of the blessings to bless someone around you.



Children's Activities

Mark 10.2-16

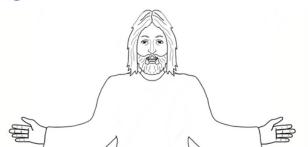
Jesus says, 'Come to me' and welcomes everyone to be with him.



Jesus draws children close to him.



Draw the things that you would want to bring to God – you, your family and friends, animals, etc.





Write a list of things that matter to God in relation to:

You

Where you live

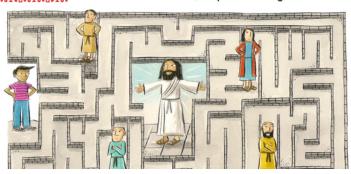
The world

All these things matter to God. Pray about them this week.





The disciples didn't understand what was important. Children matter to God, help this child get to Jesus.



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PEOPLE	JESUS	INDIGNANT	GOD	ENTER
BRINGING	TOUCH	COME	BELONGS	ARMS
LITTLE	DISCIPLES	HINDER	TRUTH	HANDS
CHILDREN	REBUKED	KINGDOM	ANYONE	BLESSED





Covid restrictions and Guidelines for Regional Victoria (excluding City of Latrobe & Mitchell Shire).

The City of Latrobe and the Mitchell Shire are the only Regional Victorian LGAs to remain under lockdown. Anyone who lives and/or works in these jurisdictions should refer to the Melbourne Metro FAQs for guidance, including the need for Permitted Worker Permits

Additional changes to Regional Victorian restrictions as of 11:59pm Sept 28 shown in red text.

The following COVID-safe restrictions apply in Regional Victoria (except in LGAs under lockdown):

- Stay at Home requirements have been lifted, but residents of Regional Victoria must not travel to metropolitan Melbourne or any regional area which is in lockdown other than for permitted reasons (eg permitted work, to visit an intimate partner, for care or compassionate reasons, to obtain goods/services provided they are from the nearest facility to your home). Travel to Metro Melb or other lockdown regions for a COVID vaccination is not permitted (even if you have a pre-existing booking). Businesses in Regional Victoria must conduct an ID check to ensure patrons are not from metro Melbourne or other lockdown regions.
- Masks must be carried at all times and must be worn at all times indoors and outdoors by Victorians aged 12 years or over unless at home, or when visiting an intimate partner's place of residence, or if an exemption applies. Face masks are recommended for primary school aged children indoors or outdoors unless at home or if an exemption applies. Face masks may only be removed to eat and to drink non-alcoholic beverages.
- Visitors to the home are not permitted. Intimate partner visits or single person bubble permitted.
- Public outdoor gatherings are limited to 10 people only. This does not include back yards or other areas of a private residence.
- Religious gatherings and ceremonies are permitted with up to 20 persons per venue, plus those workers necessary to conduct the ceremony. COVID Check-in marshals must ensure all attendees check-in.

- Funerals (indoors or outdoors) maximum of 20 people (or 5 if held at a private home) plus those required to conduct the funeral, providing all persons in attendance are from Regional Victoria. Children under 12 months are not counted in the cap. COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure all attendees check-in
- Weddings (indoors or outdoors) maximum of 10 people at a venue, including the couple and two witnesses. The celebrant and one photographer are additional to the cap. Children under 12 months are not counted in the cap. COVID Check-in Marshals must ensure all attendees check-in. Dancefloors not permitted.
- Work: if you can work from home you should work from home. Offices may return with 25% or up to 10 people if the total workplace is 40 persons or less. Density quotient of 1 person per 4sqm applies. Permitted worker permits are now only required for people who live and/or work in Metropolitan Melbourne or other lockdown areas.

Schools

- Open for Prep to Grade 2, Year 12 and final year VCAL students only. Remote learning for all other levels.
- Open to children of metropolitan Melbourne authorised workers and vulnerable children
- Twice-weekly PCR testing for teachers moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.
- Density quotient of 1 person per 4 sqm applies in non-student areas.
- Face Mask requirements apply to everyone 12 vears and over.
- Adult/Higher Education: Closed. Remote learning only unless permitted study.
- Childcare and Early Learning: Open for regional Victorian children; open for children of metropolitan Melbourne authorised workers, single parents and for vulnerable children. Twiceweekly PCR testing for teachers moving between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.
- Restaurants/Cafes: Open for seated service only with maximum of 30 outdoors and 10 indoors subject to density limits.
- Hairdressing & Beauty Services Open with a cap of 10 people. Masks can be removed if required to perform the service (eg beard trimming or facials).

Continued P2

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Uniting Church in Australia