



20 September 2020

Tamworth City Uniting Church

Contact Details:

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Other Useful Local Contacts:

- **Southside Office:** Ph/Fx 6765 3714 PO Box 5101, South Tamworth 2340, Email tsuoffice@gmail.com, Website www.tsuc.org.au
- **Southside Lay Preachers:** David Bissett 0400 186 723; Rob Wood 0447 425 411; John Nash 0428 333 358
- **Young Family Worker:** Jillian Cumberland 0402 341 684 Email: jillian.steppingstones.uca@hotmail.com
- **Peel Valley:** Margaret Crowell Mb 0408 660 025
- **UNITING St Andrew's Village** 1800 864 846 Chaplain Rev Henry Swindon 0466 445 632
- **UNITING Rainbow Cottage** 6766 7655 Sharn Mason

To continue to support our ministry financially by setting up a direct deposit into our accounts using phone or internet banking:
Account Name: Tamworth City Uniting Church
BSB: 634 634
Account No.: 100026126
Reference: Offering

Rev Betty Stroud has prepared this week's worship resources.

Church Office hours 9am-2pm Tuesday—Friday.

Stay up to date with Covid-safe health practices (our new normal). Take care.



This Week's Notes

News Items

- Congratulations to Eric Heyman, celebrating his 90th Birthday this week!
- Bill & Leona Scott send greetings from the coast.
- **We will have a virtual 'morning tea' at 10am on Sunday morning. Watch out for an invitation from Rev Betty to link in at about 10am on Sunday.** Maybe you'd like to invite someone for morning tea with you to share in the Zoom morning tea together!
- New Offering Envelopes are available at the office.
- Do you know someone doing the HSC this year? There are HSC pack available in the office.
- We have been donated a Mobility Scooter to sell. 2014 model, rarely used, make an offer—contact Judy Phillips 0418 662 081.
- May Honeyman has asked that we keep her in our prayers as she undergoes cataract surgery on both eyes in the next few weeks.
- Stay up to date with Synod <https://nswact.uca.org.au/covid19saferoadmap/> or <https://www.vision6.com.au/v/47004/1786966/email.html?k=jiAmon38b-PM6KM1rldrMt97eFeytw6wUAIYqoOhtEY>
- and Assembly <https://mailchi.mp/nat/2020week32?e=fcbdd91ff4> updates and newsletters.

Returning to Worship

The Church Council executive met and discussed returning to worship in October, **providing there are not further Covid-19 restrictions put into place**. The proposal is we meet on Sundays, 4, 11, 18 and 25 at 9:30am, and perhaps mid-week (*this will depend on how many people are interested in returning*). Holy Communion will be celebrated on 4 October—you will need to bring your own bread and drink.

Please phone the office or email if you would be interested in coming back to worship at this time. We will be limited to 45 people at each service. You will need to register each week for the service.

Remember that if you are unwell or have visited a Covid Hotspot you can not attend, you will need to wear a mask, abide by seating requirements, 1.5m social distancing will be adhered to (families may sit together), no morning tea, will be served (if you'd like to meet for coffee elsewhere that's ok), you will be encouraged to leave the site as soon as possible after worship. No Sunday School in October.



Upcoming Events

Sunday, 20 Sept: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, 10am Zoom Morning Tea. HSC Packs available.

Monday, 21 Sept: 9:30am Kairos Sewing Group in Jubilee Hall, 5pm Dare2Dance in Jubilee Hall.

Tuesday, 22 Sept: 9am-2pm Office Tue-Fri, 9:30am Locomotive Line Dancing in Jubilee Hall, 10am-1pm Op Shop at 24 Darling Street, 7pm Zoom Bible Study.

Wednesday, 23 Sept: 2:30pm Zoom Bible Study, 6pm Meditation in the Church.

Thursday, 24 Sept: 10am Stepping Stones in Dunn Hall, 10am-1pm Op Shop at 24 Darling Street.

Friday, 25 Sept: 10am-1pm Op Shop at 24 Darling Street (last day). School Term 3 ends.

Sunday, 27 Sept: Message from Mr Barry Gillett online, 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

Friday, 2 October: 10am Craft Group in St Andrew's Room.

Sunday, 4 October: 2am Daylight savings begins (put your clocks forward 1 hour), 9:30am Worship & HC—45 people only/BYO bread and drink and register with the office, Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, Zoom Morning Tea (time to be advised).

Tuesday, 6 Oct: 10am Adult Fellowship in St Andrew's Room.

Sunday, 11 October: 9:30am Worship—45 people only, register with the office, Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, Zoom Morning Tea (time to be advised).

Website, Offering and Banking Details

Our webpage has worship resources, order of service and the notice sheet each week. There is also a recorded message from Betty or the Lay Preachers on the Worship Resources page at <https://ucatamworthcity.wordpress.com/> New offering envelopes available in the office.

At this time it is important to maintain contact with each other. A telephone call is a great way to do this.

New Ideas

Have you thought about things you'd like to do with our church family, when we get a chance?

Some new ideas to share: A community garden here at church? Open Garden afternoon at your place?

Picnic in the park? Outdoor Movie Night? Adopt a grandparent? Let me know your ideas too.

Betty Stroud is taking part in the Ration Challenge



Rev Betty started the Challenge last Sunday. Her breakfast for the was fried rice with sardines and dinners are a variety of rice, lentil, chickpea and kidney bean dishes. If you would like to sponsor her and in the process help provide food, medical supplies and help with community programs in the refugee camps where Act of Peace works, please contact her on 0419 687 181, OR drop a donation into the office, OR log onto <https://actforpeace.rationchallenge.org.au/elizabeth-stroud> All donations tax deductible.

Synod Guidance Note 16

8 September 2020 - Summary of current COVID Safe Requirements

We understand that trying to keep up with the changes to government requirements can be daunting and confusing. To ensure clarity we have summarised a list of the current requirements for the most common situations. This is not an exhaustive list of every situation, for further details please visit the COVID-19 Safe Roadmap site <https://nswact.uca.org.au/covid19saferoadmap/>

In all gatherings and meetings

- Maintain 1.5m physical distancing
- Maintain hand hygiene
- Practice respiratory hygiene (cough into elbow etc)
- Stay home when sick
- Maintain attendance lists for tracing purposes
- Complete COVID Safety Plan and have copy onsite (we are told police are randomly checking – even in rural areas)

Prayers

Prayer Focus—Tamworth City

Today we focus on Children’s Ministry, Christian Education, Scripture in Schools, Sunday School, Young Families Worker—Jillian, Mission Outreach, Doing it for our Farmers and Rain bow Cottage. Please uphold thee in your private prayers during the week.

Ecumenical Prayer Calendar

Keep the people of the Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania your prayers this week.

NENW Presbytery

Keep in your prayers work being carried out to keep up with the changing nature of COVID-19 virus restrictions. There are lots of congregations doing some innovative ways of ministry and mission at the moment.

Prayer Chain

If you have a concern that you would particularly like prayer support for, please contact Judith Archbold 6766 6716 or Ted Woodhart 6766 1804.

Lectionary Readings

Sun 20 Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45*
Mon 21 Exodus 17:1-7*
Tue 22 Exodus 18:13-27
Wed 23 Philippians 2:1-13*
Thu 24 Philippians 2:14-30

Fri 25 Matthew 21:12-22
Sat 26 Matthew 21:23-32*
Sun 27 Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16*

* Denotes Sunday lectionary readings

Seasons of the Spirit

Tensions in the Wilderness

Exodus 16:2–15; Psalm 105:1–6, 37–45; Philippians 1:21–30; Matthew 20:1–16.

Prayer

Most compassionate God, we have been to the wilderness. We have known unfamiliar territory. We have hungered and despaired. But, in the wilderness, you meet us and feed us the bread of life. Refreshed and strengthened, we confess that you are our God. Amen.

Biblical Background

God listens and responds, providing through nature, other people, and communities. After the Hebrew people had fled from Egypt, they were tested by unfamiliar territory, hunger, and lack of knowledge. Amid such tension, God provided for their needs. In Matthew, Jesus responds to a time of tension with a parable about God's care and generosity.

Exodus 16:2–15 Today's story follows songs of praise and thanksgiving for God's deliverance in Exodus 15. After crossing the sea and escaping from the Egyptians, the Hebrews entered the Wilderness of Sin, known today as the Sinai Desert. Their journey was not along the main trade routes. The region was arid. Food sources were unfamiliar. The need to hunt and gather food in unfamiliar territory replaced their secure supply of food in Egypt.

The hardship the people of Israel faced in the wilderness was the result of struggling to find food and water in an unfamiliar place. However, the desert was also a place of experiencing God's abundance and a time of self-discovery. This wandering time reoriented the people from life in Egypt to life with God. God was present with them in captivity, in freedom, and the wilderness.

The people's complaint was against God's creation. God's provision came in an image of Creation – bread from heaven. The name for the bread, man-uh, is from the Hebrew question: "What is it?" Each time the Hebrews spoke the name of this bread, they recalled their question and remembered who had supplied the food. Man-uh was probably a sticky, protein-rich substance excreted by insects. God also provided quail, a small ground bird of the region. All Creation is good, as God is present in it.

Moses and Aaron received the people's complaint. God responded to Moses, who played a priestly role as mediator for the people. Moses and Aaron expand upon God's instructions. Aaron called for hope and belief. The voice from within the cloud was a powerful reminder of God's presence. The people understood that the God who delivered them also provided.

When the people of Israel complained about the lack of food, the complaint was against God. Would their memories of food and water in Egypt shake their belief in God? It seems the people had left Egypt, but Egypt had not left them. Until they had indeed left Egypt behind, it would not be possible for them to accept God's covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19–20). Receiving God's provision of food was part of getting ready to accept a new kind of relationship with God. Moses and Aaron helped the people to move on from Egypt and prepare for receiving the law.

There is completeness in this story. The entire company complained, then received God's response, and knew of God's presence and care. Such glory of God's saving presence also was celebrated in the Passover feast. Long after these events, those who recorded the stories in Exodus included detailed instructions to make sure that the Sabbath was observed. As noted by the psalmist in Psalm 105:1–6, 37–45, each generation has a role to play in passing on these great stories of faith.

God is generous with the community of God's people. Paul writes, in Philippians 1:21–30, that the struggle to claim and sustain our identity in Christ is worthy of great effort. Jesus' story in Matthew 20:1–16 about the wilderness of unemployment and the landowner who acts in surprising ways reminds us that God's generosity does not follow human reasoning. God's generosity is unlimited and reveals God's justice.

Questions

God listens and responds. Sometimes, we are part of God's response. When have you sensed God's presence in your times of tension or wilderness struggles? In what ways are you and your church agents of God's abundant generosity for others?

