



27 September 2020

Tamworth City Uniting Church

Contact Details:

- **IIM Minister:** Rev Betty Stroud 0419 687 181 or email dottedog@bigpond.com
- **Office:** 144 Marius St, PO Box 501, Tamworth 2340 Ph 02 6766 5311, Email tamworthcity.uca@gmail.com, Hrs 9am-2pm Tue-Fri Website www.ucatamworthcity.worshippress.com

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

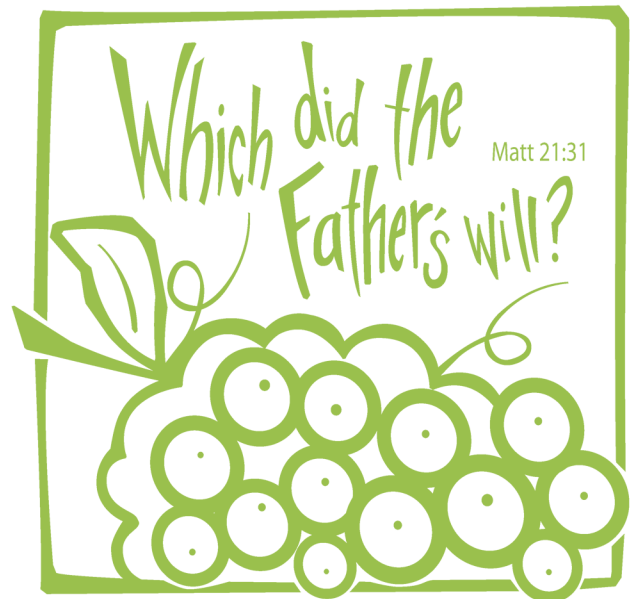
To continue to support our ministry financially by setting up a direct deposit into our accounts using phone or internet banking:
Account Name: Tamworth City Uniting Church
BSB: 634 634
Account No.: 100026126
Reference: Offering

Mr Barry Gillett has prepared this week's worship resources.

Rev Betty is in Orange 22-29 Sept.

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

- 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.
- Stay up to date with Synod <https://nswact.uca.org.au/covid19saferoadmap/> or <https://www.vision6.com.au/v/47004/1788657/email.html?k=kVykaRSaEljAEyiTf8avxHwbleOnWLIKgngdjTN3qQ4>
- and Assembly <https://mailchi.mp/nat/2020week33?e=fcbdd91ff4> updates and newsletters.

Returning to Worship



Things will look and feel different at church when we return (to comply with current restrictions and to keep you safe):

- Worship will commence at 9:30am,
- The pews are in a different location,
- Hand sanitizing station as you enter and leave,
- You will need to wear a mask,
- Couples and families may sit together, everyone else will be seated 1.5m apart, (total 45 people)
- You will need to register to attend each week (4, 11, 18 and 25 October),
- You will need to bring your own Holy Communion elements on the 4th,
- If you are unwell or have visited a Covid-Hotspot you will not be able to attend worship,
- You will be instructed on the process for departing by Rev Betty immediately prior to leaving, about social distancing and waiting.
- There will be no singing.
- An offering plate will be left at the entry table for envelopes and cash. Handing after the service with gloves.
- There will be no morning tea after worship (if you want to go somewhere else and have someone over to your place that is ok),
- You will be encouraged to leave the site as soon as possible after worship.
- No Sunday School in October.
- Social distancing is the hardest thing to do!
- There will be one person on the door (making the role and counting 45), one sound desk operator, one preacher (lapel mic), one elder (lectern mic), one reader (pulpit mic), one organist.
- There will be markers outside the church to indicate 1.5m social distancing.
- On the 4th we'd like to have a BYO picnic in Jubilee Hall (limited to 45 people). Everyone will need to keep 1.5m distancing (families may sit together). Bring along a thermos and a sandwich.

Upcoming Events

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

Monday, 28 Sept: 9:30am Kairos Sewing Group in Jubilee Hall, 5pm Dare2Dance in Jubilee Hall.

Tuesday, 29 Sept: 9am-2pm Office Tue-Fri, 9:30am Locomotive Line Dancing in Jubilee Hall, 7pm Zoom Bible Study.

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

Thursday, 1 Sept: 10am Stepping Stones in Dunn Hall.

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, NO Zoom morning tea we'll have a BYO picnic in Jubilee Hall after worship instead! 45 only!

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 took part in the Ration Challenge



I think rice might not be on Rev Betty's menu for a while. Thank you everyone. Betty raised over \$5,600.

Empathy...

Today, in the cutest voice, my 8 year old daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I chuckled again and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?" "Because that's where I keep all my stuff!" she said.

Prayers

Prayer Focus—Tamworth City

Today we focus on Pastoral Partners, Elders, St Andrew's Village, Fellowship Committee activities and Hospital Visitation. Please uphold thee in your private prayers during the week.

Ecumenical Prayer Calendar

Keep the people of the Belarus, Moldova, Russia and the Ukraine 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	27	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16*	Fri	2	Philippians 3:15-21
Mon	28	Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20*	Sat	3	Matthew 21:33-46*
Tue	29	Exodus 21:1-11	Sun	4	Psalm 19*
Wed	30	Exodus 22:20-31			
Thu	1	Philippians 3:1-14			

* Denotes Sunday lectionary readings

Seasons of the Spirit

God's Sustaining Presence

Exodus 17:1–7; Psalm 78:1–4, 12–16; Philippians 2:1–13; Matthew 21:23–32.

Prayer

Incline your ear and hear us, O God. Our spirits thirst and seek renewal in your love and forgiveness. You, O God, are the one we trust for life. Stir up your power and come among us. Restore us to live in the hope of the Christ. Amen.

Biblical Background

As the people of Israel learn to live as a community of God's people, they encounter frustration and anger, and then hope, as God's compassion comes in a surprising way. God's people today still encounter God's grace in unexpected places and persons. Together, these texts challenge us to discern God's abundant provision and our response.

Exodus 17:1–7 The people of Israel are still wandering in the wilderness, led by Moses and Aaron. In the story last week, the hungry community called out for food, and God fed them day-by-day with bread from heaven. This week's focus scripture begins as the people of Israel set up camp at Rephidim and discover there is no water. Their reaction to this dilemma is a familiar one – they lash out at Moses. How could they be sure that God was still with them? In spite of their deliverance from Egypt, their reliance on God's sustaining presence falters once again. The people accuse Moses of intending to kill them all along.

Moses, in turn, cries out to God for guidance. "What shall I do with these people?"

Moses and the people of Israel are not left alone in this wilderness of frustration and anger. God responds with grace, and the journey resumes: "Go on ahead of the people...I will be standing there in front of you." God's faithful presence and provision sustain them once again. God's faithfulness prevails over the people's lack of trust and faith.

Moses strikes the rock, and water rushes forth. The springs that are created there are named Massah and Meribah, Hebrew words that recall the Israelites' quarrelling and testing. This may seem like a reminder to not raise complaints to God. Or, perhaps, the names are more a judgment of their lack of trust in God's willingness or ability to hear and to act.

The text concludes with the question: "Is God among us or not?" This question remains critical for all who journey in faith. So does the response – water springs from a rock to bring life in the wilderness. This will not be the last time that the people of Israel grow anxious and fearful on their journey to the land of promise. Still, as is often the case for them, this time of crisis pushes them to re-affirm their trust in God's presence.

Trust that God is among us is evident in Psalm 78:1– 4, 12–16. God's provision of good things is celebrated with joy. The lectionary skips over 78:5–11, the memory of the people's rebellion against God and their refusal to keep the covenant. As a remedy against this happening again, the psalmist calls the people to remember and recite accounts of God's powerful works.

Paul, in Philippians 2:1–13, declares, "God is with us!" And to live in God's name is to be of service to all. When Paul implores the community to "work out your own salvation" (v. 12), he is not saying salvation is earned, but that the community must take the steps necessary to reach and express their complete wholeness. God calls; humans respond.

In Philippi, some favoured Caesar and some Jesus as their lord. In Matthew 21:23–32, Jesus faces religious authorities who refuse to take a stand either way. Jesus responds to this time of testing by declaring the importance of standing with God's truth, regardless of the consequences.

Questions

As we live between frustration and hope, we call out to God and our human leaders. We long to know we will be heard, that there will be a response. Assured by Christ, we can be confident of God's sustaining presence. What does it mean to trust in God alone amid test and struggle? How might you and your church support one another as you grow in trust of God's compassion and provision?

