



# 30 August 2020

## Tamworth City Uniting Church

Mr Peter Battle has prepared this week's worship resources.

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

Stay up to date with Covid-safe health practices. Take care.

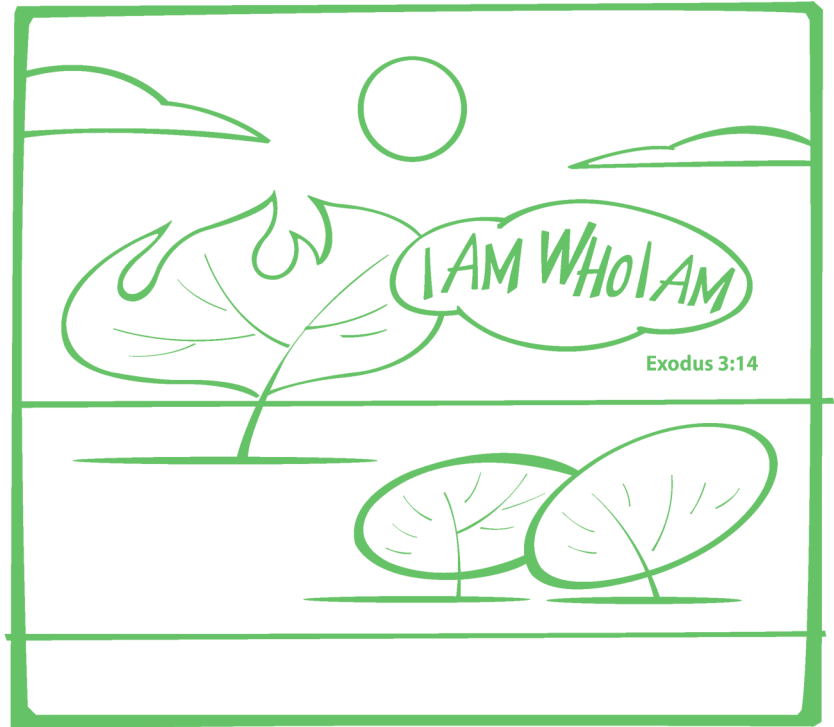
### Contact Details:

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

### Other Useful Local Contacts:

- **Southside Office:** Ph/Fx 6765 3714 PO Box 5101, South Tamworth 2340, Email [tsuoffice@gmail.com](mailto:tsuoffice@gmail.com), Website [www.tsuc.org.au](http://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](mailto: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



## This Week's Notes

### News Items

- We keep Rev Betty in our prayers as she returns to Orange for a week. Safe travel and a restful time.
- Our deepest sympathy and prayers are extended to the Richardson Family following the death of Rod earlier this month.
- **We will have a virtual 'morning tea' at 10am on Sunday morning. Watch out for an invitation from Richard & Nicolette on Friday with the notice sheet and order of service. Ready to link in at about 9:50am 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.
- Stay up to date with Synod <https://www.vision6.com.au/v/47004/1781855/email.html?k=bw9tCP07kVRr8wUU63tH2R3ZcB-vsLwo6vskHP073jg> and Assembly <https://mailchi.mp/nat/2020week29?e=fcbdd91ff4> updates and newsletters.

## Upcoming Events

Sunday, 30 August: Message from Peter Battle online, 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

Monday, 31 August: 9:30am Kairos Sewing Group in Jubilee Hall; 10am UNITINT Community Care in St Andrew's Room.

Tuesday, 1 August: 9am-2pm Office Tue-Fri, 9:30am Locomotive Line Dancing in Jubilee Hall, 7pm Zoom Bible Study.

Wednesday, 2 August: 2pm Zoom Bible Study.

Thursday, 3 August: 10am Stepping Stones in Dunn Hall.

Sunday, 6 Sept: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, 10am Zoom Morning Tea. Father's Day.

Sunday, 13 Sept: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, 9am Baptism Service for Meg Lye, 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

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

## 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.

To continue to support our ministry financially by setting up a direct deposit into our accounts using phone or internet banking details on bottom of front page. If you don't have access to these facilities we encourage you to put aside your weekly offering in an envelope to give to the church at a convenience time or leave in the box on the verandah of the office. Thank you.

## Uniting World—Beirut Explosion Appeal

The people of Beirut are facing crisis after crisis. You can help.

"The situation here is terrible, with one crisis piled onto another. The city, including our churches and schools, have sustained a heavy, heavy blow. I don't know how we'll emerge from this." - Rev. Nishan Bakalian (Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East).

Already facing an economic crisis made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, the people of Beirut are now reeling from an explosion that left 158 people dead, 6,000 injured and 300,000 homeless.

Your gift will help alleviate the suffering of people affected by the explosion; addressing immediate needs and helping with the long-er-term rebuilding and rehabilitation. Please join us praying for the victims and those affected by this disaster, for the wellbeing of the people in Beirut and for our partner churches as they respond to people's needs.

We plan to work through our Act Alliance partners in Lebanon to support churches and church agencies in Beirut to respond. We will update this page with more details of the exact activities as the humanitarian response plans are developed and details of the implementation partners become available.

We have written to churches in Lebanon to express our sorrow and solidarity. While we do not have existing programs in Lebanon, due to the strength of Uniting Church connections via Lebanese diaspora we are fundraising to support affected communities. (From the Uniting World Website)

To make a donation click on this link <https://fundraise.unitingworld.org.au/beirut> or phone 1800 998 122 for more information.



## BETTY STROUD IS TAKING PART IN THE RATION CHALLENGE

**ACT  
FOR  
PEACE**



### **What is the Ration Challenge?**

People commit to eating the same food rations as a Syrian Refugee for a week. The food ration pack includes rice - 420g, lentils - 170g, dried chickpeas - 85g, tinned sardines - 120g, tinned kidney beans - 400g and vegetable oil - 300ml. Those participating ask friends, family, acquaintances to sponsor them and thus raise money to provide food, and help with community programmes in the refugee camps. Act For Peace is the Overseas Aid Agency of the Australian Council of Churches and works closely with people in the Syrian Refugee camps in Jordan.

### **Why I am doing it**

I've taken part in two previous Ration Challenges and have found the experience to be so worthwhile. Whilst I was able to resume normal eating at the end of the challenges they did, nevertheless, give me an extremely small taste of what it would be like to exist on such meagre rations. I know I am extremely fortunate to live in Australia in the way I do. This is an opportunity for me to give back.

**The Challenge takes place from 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September. If you would like to sponsor me either log on to the following site and follow directions OR contact me on 0419 687 181. All donations tax deductible.**

<https://actforpeace.rationchallenge.org.au/elizabeth-stroud>

## With Love to the World

During these difficult days of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are seeking ways to find meaning, encouragement, and hope for life, and are keen to maintain and deepen their faith and sense of community/connectedness with their church and other Christians.

With Love to the World has been meeting these needs for the past 45 years with its daily commentaries on lectionary and associated Bible passages, prayer suggestions, and questions for individuals and groups.

Our daily Bible reading guide is now available as an app, as well as in booklet form, making it easily available wherever you may be. The annual subscription is just \$24.

To subscribe:

- Search your App Store or Play Store for With Love to the World
- For booklets, contact the church office.
- Visit our website <http://www.withlovetotheworld.org.au/>
- For more information, contact the Editor, Dr Peter Butler [butler@wagga.net.au](mailto:butler@wagga.net.au)



## Healthy Churches Expo

The Synod's Healthy Churches Expo is being held at UME Sydney on Saturday, 5 September and is available to be live streamed. This expo showcases in numerous one hour sessions, talks on issues which keep our congregations healthy. Topics such as How to Have a Healthy Church Council, How to Interpret NCLS data, How to communicate in a post COVID work are some of the sessions available. Check out the UME website <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/healthy-churches-expo-2020-registration-113856475784> for information and registration.



## Stepping Stones Playgroup

Stepping Stones Playgroup has been back in a new COVID Safe way since the beginning of term. I am so glad to be able to support mothers/carers again and reconnect with the families after a period of isolation. We have had a great time doing active play on our new mini trampoline, a hurdle set and hula hoops. We have also been crafting up some very imaginative items – foam people with different outfits, llama finger puppets, and lots of drawing. And don't forget our role playing activities, the kitchen and toolkits being the favourite areas to be playing.

Things have changed in some ways but we are still the same in the most important ways – friendship, acceptance and support of one another.

Please enjoy some photos of our playgroup from this week.

Welcome back everyone!

*Jillian's been doing a fantastic job keeping in touch with everyone and keeping connected through this long lime of isolation and changed restrictions. Thank you Jillian.*



Thank You

## Prayers

### Prayer Focus—Tamworth City

Today we focus on encouraging your individual commitment to prayer and service.

### Ecumenical Prayer Calendar

Keep the people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania 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.

### 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 30 Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c  
Mon 31 Exodus 12:1-14\*  
Tue 1 Exodus 12:29-36  
Wed 2 Exodus 13:17-14:18  
Thu 3 Romans 13:1-7

Fri 4 Romans 13:8-14\*  
Sat 5 Matthew 18:15-20\*  
Sun 6 Psalm 149\*

\* Denotes Sunday lectionary readings

# Seasons of the Spirit

## Holy and Humble Curiosity

Exodus 3:1–15; Psalm 105:1–6, 23–26, 45c or Psalm 26:1–8; Romans 12:9–21; Matthew 16:21–28

### Prayer

**You who speak into the mystery of the universe, creating life out of chaos, you invite us to look at our world with wonder, humility, and an unrelenting commitment to your liberating love. May our worship bring us into an encounter with the holiness and the life of your justice. Amen.**

### Biblical Background

This week's story from Exodus presents us with what, for Moses, was the unexpected, surprising, and humbling call to be an agent of God's justice. Moses has much to lose. His life has grown comfortable, but as Jesus affirms in today's gospel reading, life is only gained when we are ready to let it go. It begins on Holy Ground, a place Moses enters with humility, but also a place he leaves with a renewed commitment to let his love, his passion for justice have the genuineness spoken of by the Apostle Paul.

Exodus 3:1–15 When Moses encounters a burning bush, he has every reason to feel that the passion he once had for the suffering of the Israelite people was something that he long ago put behind him. As a young man and the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, he had risked everything to intervene on behalf of his Hebrew kin who was being abused by an Egyptian. In exile, he had started a new life with a family and a livelihood as a shepherd for his Midianite father-in-law. But Moses remained one who asked questions, whose curiosity led him to places he might otherwise never go. His exile was the direct result of his questioning the abuse of his people. When Moses comes upon a bush that is burning, but not consumed, he asks questions and investigates, which in turn leads him to Holy Ground where he encounters the voice of God. It is impossible to separate the curiosity and questioning of Moses from his encounter with the Holy. Without a spirit willing to explore, wonder, and be open to what he was unable to understand, there would be no voice calling out to him. The questioning, the curiosity, and the sacred place in which he encounters the holy voice of God go hand in hand. What's more, the curiosity and the experience of holiness are inseparable from what comes next; the call of God for Moses to be God's agent of justice and liberation for the people. It may have seemed to the Hebrews that God had moved on, just as Moses had sought to move on, leaving the agony of the Israelites behind. However, God was listening to the cry of their oppression. When this questioning, curiosity-driven son of Pharaoh's daughter shows up, God calls upon Moses to speak out on behalf of justice. Holy curiosity that leads one in the ways of God is necessarily accompanied by the type of humility that removes one's shoes on Holy Ground and also a humility which acknowledges one's own weaknesses and limitations. It should come as no surprise that Moses humbly responds with apprehension at this justice liberation call. According to this week's text, Moses hears from God a word that is spoken to all whose curiosity brings them to holy ground and the call to be agents of justice, "I will be with you." The call of Moses to be an agent of God's justice is one that puts in sharp tension the two contrasting expressions found in scripture of what is required of those who wish to live in relationship with God. On the one hand, there is the model of patriarchy, imperialism, and domination. This is the model of Pharaoh, a model adopted by the Israelites when they opt for a king and which continues manifesting itself as a tension in the New Testament. Moses lives in the counter creation covenant model in which liberation and justice are central to a right relationship with the Holy.

Psalm 105:1–6, 23–26, 45c opens with a song of praise to God. This moment of praise continues through the highlighting of the prophets, Abraham, and Jacob and ends with a description of Moses' call with his brother Aaron. This passage upholds the history and gratitude for past leaders. Moses is the first of a long line of prophets, who, with the prophet Micah, continue posing the question "What does the Lord require, but to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with our God?"

It is this counter anti-imperial, pro-covenant life that the Apostle Paul has in mind in Romans 12:9–21 when he says, "let love be genuine...(v. 9). If your enemies are hungry feed them..."(v. 20). It is this anti-imperial, God embracing covenant that Jesus bears witness to in Matthew 16:21–28 when he says, "For those who want to save their lives will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

### Questions

Curiosity and questioning bring Moses in humility to the place of Holy Ground. What does Holy Ground look like for your community of faith?

