



14 June 2020

Tamworth City Uniting Church

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Other Useful Local Contacts:

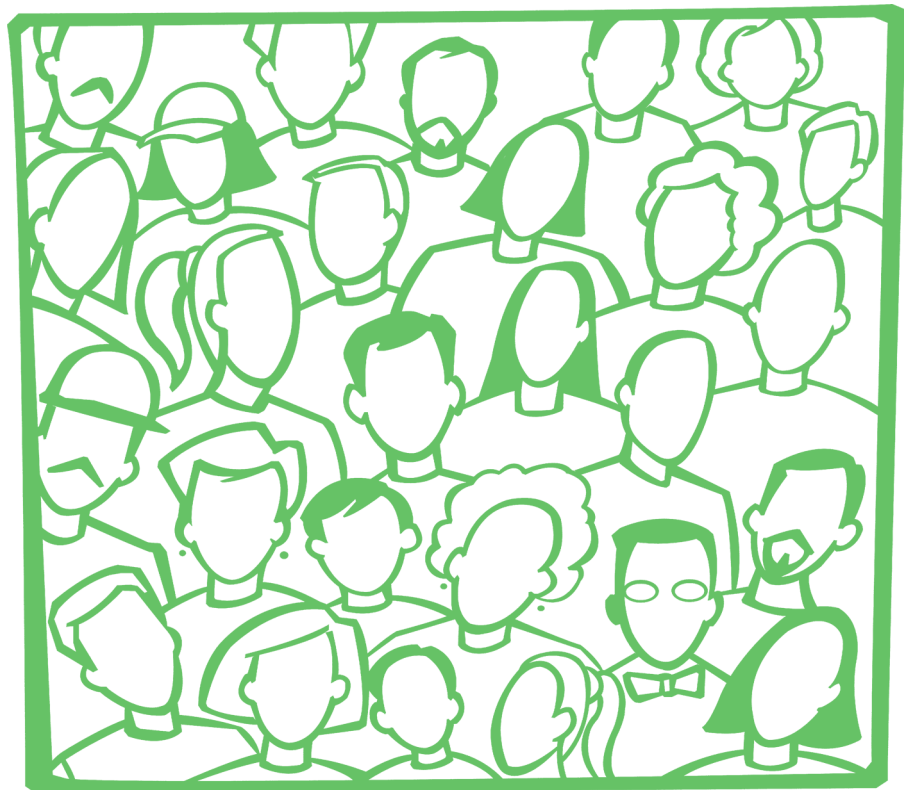
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- **Peel Valley:** Margaret Crowell Mb 0408 660 025
- **UNITING St Andrew's Village** 1800 864 846 Chaplain Rev Henry Swindon 0466 445 632
- **UNITING Rainbow Cottage** 6766 7655 Sharn Mason

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

Zoom morning tea is at 10am, look out for your email link.

Nicolette is in the office as usual, although closed to the public.

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



Jesus had compassion for the crowds
Matthew 9:36

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

At this time it is important to maintain contact with each other.

A telephone call is a great way to do this. Make a cuppa and give someone a call.

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 Number:	100026126
Reference:	Offering

If you don't have facilities to phone or internet bank we encourage you to put aside your weekly offering in an envelope to give to the church at a convenience time. Leave in the box on the verandah at the office or during office hours. Thank you.

This Week's Notes

Good News Items

- We've been enjoying some lovely morning teas on Zoom at 10am each week. Lots of different people come and go over the morning, it's lovely to see all the smiling faces.
- **We will have a virtual 'morning tea' at 10am on Sunday morning.**
- Notes from our church council meeting will be available next week.
- Rev Betty will be taking two week's leave at the end of June (18 June—1 July). Peter Battle and Barry Gillett will be preparing worship resources on those who Sundays. Hoping they'll do a video as well for the website!
- Op Shop News—sorry we are not ready to open yet. Your health and well-being is our first priority when considering when to come back from lockdown. However, in preparation, would you like to ring Judy (0418 662 081) or the office (6766 5311) to indicate if you would like to come back to volunteer at the shop when we are ready. Please note that those over 70yrs will need to have a doctor's certificate before commencing.

Notes From Synod

- The government has put out a health checklist for churches which has been taken into consideration in our decision. At this stage while we can open for up to 50 people, it is for worship, weddings and funerals only, no other activities, unless they are welfare related.
- However, as the Associate Secretary says in her letter, "Even though restrictions are easing, it does not make returning to face to face worship an automatically safe or wise option." (For example-no singing will be allowed)
- Before re-opening can happen, all church councils must meet and work out their own plan for how it will occur in their buildings, and who will be responsible for making sure the plan is carried out.
Sharing
- Failure to comply with these guidelines can incur huge fines, and UFS will not free up any investment money to meet these fines. They will be the sole responsibility of those people caught doing the wrong thing.
- The health and safety of all members of our churches and community are at the forefront of all of our decisions. Just because you can re-open, doesn't mean you should. Caution must be exercised, and the question should be asked, "Are we anxious to resume worship to engage in Mission/Ministry, or to make ourselves feel better?"
- We understand the frustration this will cause some of you, but ask you to refrain from opening for a while longer, particularly if you can't meet all of the criteria.

Upcoming Events in June

Sunday, 14 June: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online; 10am Zoom Morning Tea

Thursday, 18 June: Rev Betty on leave until 1 July

Sunday, 21 June: Message from Mr Peter Battle online; 10am Zoom Morning Tea

Monday, 22 June: UCA Anniversary

Tuesday, 23 June: Saltbush Staff Meeting in St Andrew's Room

Wednesday, 24 June: Saltbush Staff Meeting in St Andrew's Room

Sunday, 28 June: Message from Mr Barry Gillett online; 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

Sunday, 5 July: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online; 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

Sunday, 12 July: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online; 10am Zoom Morning Tea.



Pentecost Sunday Recording in the Church

Doing it for our Farmers

The food pantry has been busy during this drought and COVID time making up hampers for local farmers. Here's this week's pamper hampers:



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Prayers

Prayer Focus—Tamworth City

Today we focus on the activities of the Worship, Evangelism, Property and Finance Admin committees. Please uphold these in your private prayers during the week.

Ecumenical Prayer Calendar

Keep the people of Angola and Mozambique in your prayers this week.

NENW Presbytery

Keep in your prayers work being carried out to have worship connections with congregations during the COVID-19 virus restrictions. There are lots of exciting things happening out there! Working together as restrictions lift.

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 14 Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19*
Mon 15 Genesis 21:1-21*
Tue 16 Genesis 21:22-34
Wed 17 Jeremiah 10:7-13
Thu 18 Romans 5:18-21

Fri 19 Romans 6:1-11*
Sat 20 Matthew 10:24-39*
Sun 21 Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17*

* Denotes Sunday lectionary readings



In the midst of preparing to move back into our office, I heard this story of hope and resilience from Zimbabwe, and I immediately wanted to share it with you.

Usually at this time of the month, Anna would be taking her chickens to market to sell to help feed her family. She's part of a livelihoods project run by our partner MeDRA in Zimbabwe. But right now, due to the COVID-19 lockdown, there's no transport and people are being asked to stay away from marketplaces.

Undeterred, Anna has shifted her attention to [helping educate her community](#) about health and hygiene using resources provided by our partner MeDRA. She and other women are tirelessly spreading the message of physical distancing and handwashing in rural areas, where there is hardly any access to health information and very little social media or radio.

Here's what she had to say:

"I really believe that if we stay united and follow the precautions, we can beat COVID-19."

To put her story in context, here are a few fast facts about Zimbabwe right now:

76% of children living in rural Zimbabwe live below the poverty line

90% of people are either unemployed or working in the precarious informal economy, and an extra million people are now living in extreme poverty

An outbreak of malaria is complicating COVID-19 responses and people fear the health system is already at the point of collapse.

In spite of all this, Anna is one of those people who take adversity and wring out of it everything she can to learn and grow and help others. And the thought of all the 'Annas' out there today makes me more determined than ever to stand by in support.

I hope you will too.

[Please give what you can to our COVID-19 response appeal.](#) Combined with funding from the Australian Government, we can make your donation go up to six times as far in the field saving lives.* And would you consider forwarding this email to others, or [sharing the video below](#) through your networks, to let other people know how they can be involved too? You can pray for our partners using this list of prayer requests and find out more about the people you'll be supporting [here](#).

Thank you for joining the power of people uniting and standing with us beside people like Anna.

With love and determination,

Dr Sureka Goringe, National Director UnitingWorld

*Visit www.unitingworld.org.au/actnow to read more about our partnership with the Australian Government and how your gift goes further.

Seasons of the Spirit

Sacrifice

Genesis 18:1–15, (21:1–7); Psalm 116:1–2, 12–19 Romans 5:1–8; Matthew 9:35–10:8, (9–23)

Prayer

Healing God, help us to open ourselves to your call to aid others. Teach us how to sacrifice our own comfort and expectations to better serve the needs of our hurting world. Grant us vision, strength, and joy for this work. Amen.

Biblical Background

In this week's readings, we witness people called by God to perform marvellous acts – giving birth in old age and curing the sick. Accepting these callings require a willingness to sacrifice one's own comfort to serve God and others. The texts invite us to explore sacrifice in our own lives as we seek to live out God's call.

Genesis 18:1–15 tells the prediction of Isaac's birth. Abraham and Sarah were focused on providing hospitality to mysterious visitors, as was an important custom in this time. Little did they know that it was they who would be receiving a great gift that day. When they least expect it, God promises the miraculous birth of a child despite their old age. In accepting this promise, Sarah and Abraham had to sacrifice control of their life and trust in God. Despite their initial disbelief and laughter, they ultimately rejoice when Isaac is born.

In **Psalm 116:1–2, 12–19**, we hear the thankful voice of those who have cried out and been heard by God. It serves as a reminder that those who are persecuted are ones who God stands with and supports. Even though they might meet death, God does not abandon them.

In great compassion, God creates and sustains hope. In **Romans 5:1–8**, Paul asserts how suffering need not end in despair, because of God's love that continues to pour into our hearts.

Matthew 9:35–10:8 (9–23) describes the ministry of Jesus and his disciples. There are many in need of Jesus' healing ministry. Jesus acknowledges that he cannot do this work alone and calls disciples to join him. However, the authority to cast out unclean spirits and cure disease requires that the disciples sacrifice their former lives and any hopes of wealth or prestige.

Jesus instructs them to begin their ministry in the Jewish community. While this may seem like an unfair exclusion of the Gentiles, it demonstrates the need to limit ministry at times so that it can be most effective, particularly when resources are few. It may also seek to address the internal turmoil of the predominately Jewish Matthean audience. The community needs to heal from the traumas experienced in the violent destruction of the Temple, which was its primary sacred space and means of connecting to God. The passage points to the importance of ministering to and strengthening community. But this requires sacrifice and compassion on the part of those facilitating healing. The responses of the traumatized community are diverse, ranging from hostility and suspicion to gratitude and hospitality. Jesus is aware of this and instructs the disciples to mindfully discern their ministry.

Questions

Sharing the Good News brings joy and suffering. Paul shows us that this suffering ultimately leads to hope rather than despair. Likewise, Jesus demonstrates making the sacrifice to share in his ministry does not require that we accept all suffering and hostility. Instead, we are called to discern where our ministry is most needed. God calls us, individually and as a church, to the urgent work of carrying God's love and care into the world, and we can trust in God to sustain us on the way. To what urgent work are you and your church being called today?

