



16 August 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:

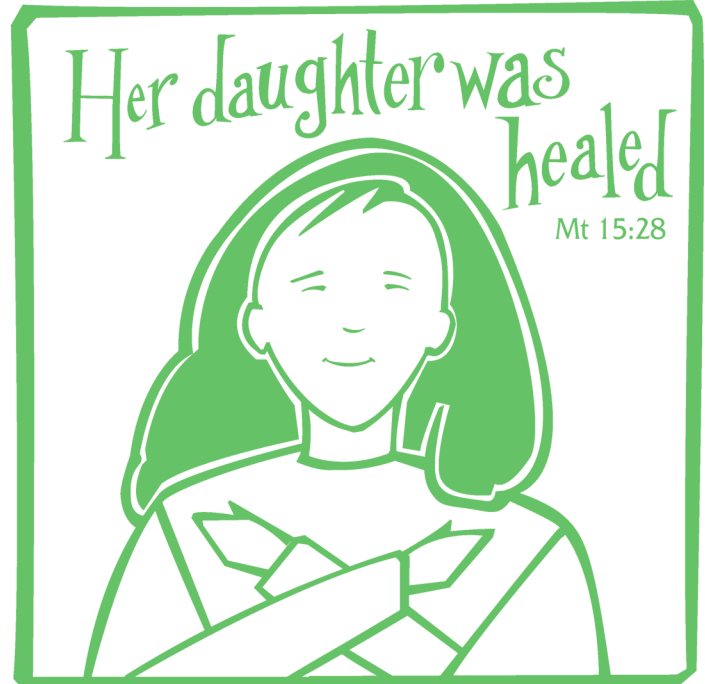
- **Southside Office:** Ph/Fx 6765 3714 PO Box 5101, South Tamworth 2340, Email tsuoffice@gmail.com, Website www.tsuc.org.au
- **Southside Lay Preachers:** David Bissett 0400 186 723; Rob Wood 0447 425 411; John Nash 0428 333 358
- **Young Family Worker:** Jillian Cumberland 0402 341 684 Email: jillian.steppingstones.uca@hotmail.com
- **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

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

Nicolette is back in the office this week.

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



This Week's Notes

News Items

- We keep Rod Richardson and Julie Bennett in our prayers at the moment too. Both are facing significant health issues. Also Alleyne Woodhart, Bonnie Mills and Barbara McLean, as they continue to recuperate after falls.
- **We will have a virtual 'morning tea' at 10am on Sunday morning. Watch out for an invitation from Rev Betty 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 not on Zoom for morning tea to join us.
- **Church Council Meeting:** Regular Zoom Covid Safety Plan meetings going well. A number of applications have been passed. Some will need to be adjusted before we can approve them. New regulations mean that for most groups masks will have to be worn. Contact the office for more info.
- New Offering Envelopes are available at the office.

- Stay up to date with Synod https://www.vision6.com.au/v/47004/1776746/email.html?k=recYM5LlOt-xL_-kNjpBx7cuO3PSq8GNpIBGrVvRBL4 and Assembly <https://mailchi.mp/nat/2020week26?e=fcbdd91ff4> updates and newsletters.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, 16 August: 9am Baptism Service for Henry Cameron. Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

Monday, 17 August: 9:30am Kairos Sewing Group in Jubilee Hall.

Tuesday, 18 August: 9:30am Locomotive Line Dancing in Jubilee Hall, 7pm Zoom Bible Study.

Wednesday, 19 August: 2pm Zoom Bible Study.

Thursday, 20 August: 10am Stepping Stones in Dunn Hall.

Sunday, 23 August: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

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

Sunday, 6 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.

Prayers

Prayer Focus—Tamworth City

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

Ecumenical Prayer Calendar

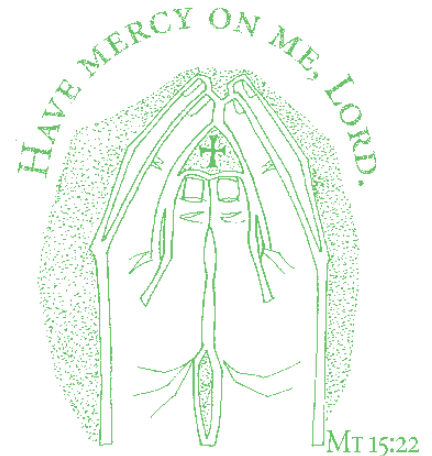
Keep the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia your prayers this week.

NENW Presbytery

Keep in your prayers work being carried out to keep up with the changing nature of COVID-19 virus restrictions. Presbytery annual general meeting coming up on 29 August.

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 16 Psalm 133*

Mon 17 Exodus 1:8-22

Tue 18 Exodus 2:1-10

Wed 19 Romans 11:33-36

Thu 20 Romans 12:1-8*

Fri 21 Matthew 16:1-12

Sat 22 Matthew 16:13-20*

Sun 23 Psalm 124*

* Denotes Sunday lectionary readings

Seasons of the Spirit

Subversive Forgiveness

Genesis 45:1–15; Psalm 133; Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32; Matthew 15: (10–20), 21–28

Prayer

Holy One, you called this world into existence, forging a unity of life from the very beginning. The divisions and brokenness we have created are met by the irrevocable power of your mercy and grace. You show us the way of forgiveness with the gentle blessing of your love. Amen.

Biblical Background

This week's texts intersect around the theme of forgiveness, unity, and the subversive ways these gentle but powerful forces can restore relationships, heal divisions, and, as the writer of Psalm 133 says, become the foundation for the blessings ordained by God.

Genesis 45:1–15 Neither Joseph's brothers, nor the rulers of Egypt, could have anticipated Joseph's response to seeing his brothers who had come to Egypt in hopes of finding relief from the famine gripping the land. Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery. Upon realizing that Joseph had risen to a position of power and authority, they are filled with fear and dismay, no doubt anticipating that Joseph would now have his revenge. As one who had learned to navigate the imperial world of Egyptian rule, Joseph knew that utilizing his power for retribution would not only be understood but expected.

Imperial and patriarchal systems of authority thrive on division, control, and exploitation. Joseph himself had spent years in an Egyptian cell, even though the charges against him were false (Genesis 39). It was Joseph's vision that enabled the Egyptian people and now his family to survive the famine, but survival within an imperial system came at a tremendous cost, including the appropriation of land, livelihoods and ultimately freedom (Genesis 47:12–26). In spite of Joseph's considerable power and authority, he never escaped the discrimination of segregated dining where Israelites, including Joseph, were kept from eating in the same place as Egyptians (Genesis 43:32).

Joseph's brothers, along with Egyptian rulers, expected Joseph to live by these imperial norms with retribution being the direct result. However, Joseph, remembering the covenant-making, freedom-giving God of his youth, chooses to live by different standards, different values; an alternative way of being. Even though his brothers' intention was one of harm to him, rather than have them thrown into jail as anticipated, Joseph reframes their experience by seeing the God of liberation at work. Refusing to be confined and imprisoned by hatred and bitterness, Joseph sets himself and his brothers free with forgiveness and charity. In time, these counter-norms of forgiveness, healing, and unity will become a threat to Egypt. But, for Joseph and his family, its immediate impact is to restore a relationship that had been severely broken.

Psalm 133 offers the subversive claim that to live in unity with kindred (one another and all Creation) is to experience the blessings of God. Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32 is Paul's reframing of division, insisting all need God's mercy. God's gifts (of healing) and calling (for unity) are irrevocable. Matthew 15:(10–20), 21–28 tells the story of Jesus continuing to subvert the norms of imperial rule by ignoring the superficial trappings of power and wealth, instead guarding against practices that fracture relationships and community. Jesus himself is reminded of the fullness of God's mercy, healing, and unity when confronted by a Canaanite woman.

Questions

Forces of domination both foster and rely upon division, resentments, and conformity in order to maintain their status and power. A spirit of forgiveness and charity subverts this power by making possible a unity of care and compassion, setting us free from all that separates us. This subversive spirit of forgiveness and unity runs throughout today's text. What is it that makes forgiveness so subversive? What challenge does it present to those with power and authority?

