



9 August 2020

Tamworth City Uniting Church

Contact Details:

- **IIM Minister:** Rev Betty Stroud 0419 687 181 or email dottydog@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.worpress.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.

Sorry about our Zoom morning tea, the NBN was down everywhere around the state.

Nicolette is on leave 11-14 August.

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



This Week's Notes

News Items

- **Congratulations! Karina, Heath and Roman Falkenmire welcome the safe arrival of Elsa Rose. Keep them in your prayers, Elsa was born three weeks early.**
- We keep Rod Richardson and Julie Bennett in our prayers at the moment too. Both are facing significant health issues.
- **We will have a virtual 'morning tea' at 10am on Sunday morning. Watch out for an invitation from Rev Betty this week at about 9:50am on Sunday.**
- Maybe you'd like to invite someone not on Zoom for morning tea to join us.



• **Reminder: Church Council meeting on Tuesday, 11 August. 7pm in the Church.**

- COVIDSafe arrangements: (you are encouraged to wear a mask)
- If you are unwell you should not attend this meeting.
- An attendance register will be kept.
- Conditions of entry are that we will only have 45 people maximum in the church, spaced appropriately for 4sqm rule and 1.5m distancing.
- Seating will be marked.
- Hand sanitiser and wipes will be available at the entry (front door) and exit (vestry door) of the church. Handsoap available in the vestry.
- Data projector will be used for all presentations.
- Please bring your own pen and paper for notes, water bottle for a drink.
- You will be asked upon arrival about your general health, if you have been to Victoria or Overseas in the previous two weeks, have you downloaded the COVID Safe App on phone and use it?
- The church library will remain closed for the time being.
- New Offering Envelopes are available at the office.
- **COVID Safety Plans:** Every group in the church and those hiring will be required to complete a COVID-19 Safety Plan to be submitted to Council for approval before recommencing. Council will meet regularly via ZOOM to assess these applications before they are forwarded to Presbytery and Synod. A number of groups have already had plans passed including the Church Council, Stepping Stones Playgroup, Kairos Sewing Group, Church Office, Minister's Small Groups, Doing it for our Farmers, . Contact the office for more info.
- Stay up to date with Synod https://www.vision6.com.au/v/47004/1775043/email.html?k=dODbRqY3PgrRR_2LQopjkJ8zVh8loCZ1ZAZ5Z6jcm_E and Assembly <https://mailchi.mp/nat/2020week25?e=fcbdd91ff4> updates and newsletters.
- **COVID-19 Guidance Note just in:**

Please pray for the people of Victoria, in particular in Melbourne as they face difficult weeks to come. In reminding us that 'no border is impenetrable', the Premier of NSW has issued the strong recommendation that places of worship refrain from gathering face to face wherever possible. Should face to face worship be unavoidable, all participants are strongly urged to wear a face mask and to refrain from any form of singing. The Premier of NSW stressed that while these recommendations are not compulsory, they are made to keep people safe and minimise the risk of further outbreaks. The Premier of NSW concluded with saying 'I cannot stress how critical the next few weeks are.' As a result, the Synod of NSW-ACT strongly recommends that:

- All congregations in NSW and ACT refrain from face to face worship at this time. Services should continue to be streamed or recorded to enable people to engage in worship.
- Should any congregation feel they must gather face to face, every participant should wear a face mask.
- No singing of any kind. This includes community, congregational or choir led singing. No singing applies even if people wear a mask.



Upcoming Events

Sunday, 9 August: Message from Rev Betty Stroud online, 10am Zoom Morning Tea.

Monday, 10 August: 9:30am Elders meeting with Rev Betty in St Andrew's Room; 9:30am Kairos Sewing Group in Jubilee Hall.

Tuesday, 11 August: 9:30am Locomotive Line Dancing in Jubilee Hall; 7pm Church Council meeting in the church.

Wednesday, 12 August: 2pm Bible Study on Zoom.

Thursday, 13 August: 10am Stepping Stones in Dunn Hall.

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

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..

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 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 Canada and the United States of America 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 and the transition back to physical worship. There are lots of exciting things happening out there! Working together as restrictions lift. 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.

Church Council

Keep our Church Council in your prayers as they help us work through ongoing changes during the COVID-19 precautions and restrictions.

Lectionary Readings

Sun 9 Psalm 105:1-22

Mon 10 Genesis 45:1-15*

Tue 11 Genesis 48:8-20

Wed 12 Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32*

Thu 13 Isaiah 56:1-8

Fri 14 Matthew 15:1-9

Sat 15 Matthew 15:21-28*

Sun 16 Psalm 133*

* Denotes Sunday lectionary readings

Seasons of the Spirit

Dreaming Big

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28; Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45b; Romans 10:5–15; Matthew 14:22–33.

Prayer

Liberating God, we raise our voice with thanksgiving and praise for the presence of your spirit that is continually at work among saints and sinners, bringing into being the hope of your love and justice for all creation. Amen.

Biblical Background

This week, we are introduced to the larger narrative of Joseph, the dreamer, and the role he plays in the unfolding promise of liberation for all people. Each of the readings, in their own way, reminds us we too are a part of a larger narrative of God's grace infused into the fullness of all creation. Beyond the limitations of our imaginations is the hope and promise of Love's "Good News."

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28 It comes as no great surprise that one of Jacob's sons was both despised and celebrated for dreams that enabled him to anticipate and imagine a world that was yet to be. It was Jacob who, in the middle of the night, saw angels climbing and descending a ladder, and it was Jacob whose middle of the night encounters included a stranger with whom he wrestled. Joseph shared this gift of dreams, and he was both despised and celebrated for them. Joseph's brothers were already resentful of the favoritism their father offered their younger brother. Joseph's dream (Genesis 37:5–11), skipped over in our reading, only makes things worse. In one dream, Joseph's brothers and his parents bowed down to him.

Joseph's brothers who undoubtedly have dreams of their own, conspire to kill Joseph, covering their misdeeds by concocting a story that he was killed by a wild animal. Instead, however, they find a less troubling and slightly profitable alternative by selling Joseph to Midianite traders who, in turn, bring Joseph to Egypt. In time, Joseph's dreams are celebrated by the Egyptian pharaoh, who comes to trust the strategic insights they provide (Genesis 41:39,40).

Nowhere in this story do we hear a word about God, but when one puts today's text within the larger context of the Joseph narrative, it becomes clear that the central dream is not the lesser dreams of Joseph, with his visions of personal power and authority or even the dreams of his brothers with their longing for retribution. The dominant dream in this narrative is what African American theologian, Verna Dozier refers to as "The Dream of God." In her book, by the same name, Dozier states, "God's great dream is founded on the rock of human freedom," later noting the biblical name for this overarching dream is the realm of God.

Throughout this story, the shortcomings of human dreams are continually caught up in the much bigger dream of God. There is no indication that either Reuben or Judah recognizes the dream of God's freedom at work, but they do their small part, and it is sufficient in not only keeping Joseph alive but also the dream of God's liberation for all people.

Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45b comes as a reminder to give thanks for and remember the liberating dream of God, especially when that dream seems far away, and we are inclined to forget or become consumed by our lesser dreams.

Romans 10:5–15 is Paul's proclamation that the dream of God for our salvation/liberation is particularly good news, one we are called to share with all without distinction or limitation. It is a salvation of unfolding liberation. **Matthew 14:22–33** comes as an encouragement to the early church who face the type of uncertain future faced by Joseph. Even amidst fears and doubts, we can put our faith in the one who calms troubled waters.

Questions

The exiles in Babylon, the first recipients of sacred text written down, needed, and no doubt cherished, the reminder that even when all looks lost, the liberating dream of God is at work. Joseph's uncertain future was their uncertain future. The small dreams of Joseph and his brothers were their dreams as well. Like Joseph and his brothers, they too are caught up in a larger dream of God's liberating love and justice. How might the dream of God's liberation make a difference for the Israelites, the psalmist, Paul and the disciples?

