

People, Participation and Prayer: a church isn't a building of brick and wood. It's a group of people gathered by God who are building their lives around Jesus. That's why belonging to church means more than just Sunday services. In this **Newsweek** are some of the things we are doing, events and activities we think are worthwhile, and people and things to pray for. Pray regularly for our Church family.

Please pray for our world, our community, and each other

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ
Philippians 4:6, 7

The next Congregation Prayer Meeting will be on Thursday 20th August at 11 AM

PLEASE PRAY FOR:-

* **SRE Classes** have resumed in our local Schools for Term 3 – Rev. Ian is teaching the Year 6 SRE Class at Belrose Public School every Wednesday morning – please pray!!

Healing, Strength & Comfort for:

- * Gwen Gatford
- * Len Broadbent
- * Gordon & Jan Allan – Gordon preparing for hip replacement surgery on 18th August
- * Gordon Richardson & his family of the recent sudden death of Gordon's grandson Jason
- * Church members who are still self-isolating
- * Church members grieving the loss of family or friends
- * *those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and for those who are vulnerable to infection;*
- * *local businesses & their staff*
- * *those who have lost their jobs*
- * *our health care service personnel*
- * *our Governments & those in leadership*



August Mission of the Month

Gyanankur English Medium School is an independent Indian school for Preschool to Year 10 in Kesnand, a village near Pune in India, 4 hours' drive southeast of Mumbai.

The school has a Christian board to oversee it, and many Christian teachers. Anne Weeks' friend Melinda Parker, who now lives in Sydney, is the Honorary Director. Anne helps out with admin work.

Gyanankur enrolls some students from very poor families and the school provides them with uniforms & textbooks. With our financial support we can enable these students to receive this education, and hear and see Christians sharing Jesus.

Please keep giving! You are encouraged to make use of the electronic funds transfer option from your bank account to the Uniting Financial Services Congregation account using the following information:

Belrose UC Property Committee
BSB 634-634 Acc Number 10000-1487

The next edition of the Good News Quarterly will be coming out soon.

Editor Venessa would welcome your contributions by email:
venessac@tpg.com.au

The Manse landline phone is still out of action 😞 but you can still contact Rev Ian on his **mobile 0408 308 196**, or by email mail@belrose.unitingchurch.org.au

Belrose Uniting Church

Corner Forest Way and Morgan Road, Belrose
TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN

GOOD NEWSWEEK

*“The earth is the Lord's and everything in it ...”
Psalm 24:1*

*Sunday 16th August 2020
Covid-19 Suspension 2/1*

Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ from Frenchs Forest to Terrey Hills; from the beaches to the bush, since 1916.

Who are we? We are all about following Jesus.

We are part of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations of the UCA, joining with other UCA Congregations in contending for the Biblical faith: *Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, Proclaiming the Truth and Renewing the Church.*

We are “evangelical” Christians, which means that Jesus shapes the heart of our worship, the Bible shapes the heart of our life, and the Gospel (the Good News about Jesus) shapes our heart for a broken world.

August Theme: Who is in Control?

In a world that seems to be increasingly chaotic and out of control, we may well ask the questions: Who is in control? Where is God? Is all this? Has God fallen asleep at the wheel? Has God lost control? Throughout August I am exploring what the Bible has to say about these questions.

In the stories of Joseph, Ruth and Esther, and in the experiences of the early Church, I hope that we will see that no matter what is going on, God is still with us and working His good and perfect plan, in spite of disaster, catastrophe, human failings, wickedness and rebellion.

But Joseph said to them, “Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”
Genesis 50:19, 20

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father, There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not, as Thou has been Thou forever will be.
Great is Thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand has provided – great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.*

Pastor: Rev Ian Weeks
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Wednesday – Monday (Tuesday off)

Church Website: <http://www.belrose.unitingchurch.org.au>
Prayer Requests:
prayer.team@belrose.unitingchurch.org.au



Breaking News: Covid-19 Developments

It is with a heavy heart and much sadness that the Church Council has decided, based on the strong advice of the UCA Synod following the recent announcements by the NSW Premier, that **Sunday Services have been suspended again as from Monday 10th August.**

The closure of Sunday worship services will be at least for the next three Sundays 16th – 30th August, during which time the Church Council will review the situation based upon the advice of the Synod and the pronouncements from the NSW Government.

You will be advised in due course when the Services can resume and when we can meet again on **Sundays at 9.30 am and 5.30 pm.**

Please pray for our nation at this time, and especially for a breakthrough in the pandemic that will allow us to meet together for worship again as soon as possible.

The doors may be shut but we are still the Church and God is in control: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35 – 39)

In the mean-time, want to “worship at home”?

Look out for live Services on the internet such as:

FF Baptist Church Sundays 9.30 am www.ffbc.org.au

St Faiths Anglican Narrabeen Sundays 9 am & 6 pm <https://stfaiths.church>

Pittwater UC 9.30 am & 6 pm Sundays: <https://pittwater.online.church>

Wesley Mission 10.00 am Sundays:
www.wesleymission.org.au/christian-life/congregations-online

St Matthews Anglican Manly Sundays 10am & 6pm www.stmattzmanly.org.au

WHAT'S ON @ BUC – Mark Your Diary for August 2020

(Please note that due to the Covid-19 restrictions, some activities may not yet be able to be held on the Church premises.)

Thurs 20th August	Congregation Prayer Meeting	11.00 am
Thurs 20th August	Church Council meeting	7.30 pm
Thurs 27th August	Congregation Prayer Meeting	7.30 pm

NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY CONGREGATION MEETING:

Sunday 13th September 2020 at 10.30 am. Agenda & papers coming soon.

The Story of Esther: The opportunistic God?

The OT book of Esther, set in the 5th century BC, tells of the people of God in exile – taken captive into a foreign land originally by the Babylonians in 587 BC, but now under the yoke of the Persian Empire and its king, Xerxes. It is a story of a King's excesses; a manipulative and ambitious Counsellor, Haman; a wise and faithful Jew, Mordecai, and his humble and courageous young cousin, Esther.

Read: Esther Ch 2:1 – 9, 15 - 19

1. A Narcissistic King & A Humble Jewish Girl Esther Chs 1 & 2

If you have watched the classic movie *The 300 Spartans* (or its more recent remake *300*) you would get an idea of the ego of Xerxes. He made himself out to be “King of kings” and a “god”; and didn't mind flouting his power and wealth (v 4).

It looks like his Queen (Vashti) had had enough – she snubbed Xerxes, and he didn't take it too well (v 12). Vashti is banished, and the King's counsellors plan for someone to take her place. Here we meet Esther, young and virtuous cousin to Mordecai, one of the Jewish nobles taken into exile and finding himself employed in Xerxes court. Esther is chosen and soon finds favour with Xerxes over all of the girls in his harem (Ch 2 vv 17, 18).

Meanwhile, Mordecai also finds favour with King Xerxes when he uncovers a plot to assassinate Xerxes, and both Esther and Mordecai are rewarded (vv 19 - 23). These two godly people now find themselves in the inner circle of the King.

2. A Scheming Counsellor and A People in Peril Esther Chs 3 & 4

Enter Haman, a “nobleman” of Xerxes court, though there is not much about him that is noble. When Mordecai refuses to bow down & “worship” Haman, the enraged Haman decides to take it out on Mordecai and his people (Ch 3 vv 5, 6). Haman manipulates Xerxes and persuades him pass a law that proposes to wipe out all the Jews in the Kingdom – genocide!

Mordecai entreats Esther to appeal to Xerxes on behalf of their people: “*For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?*” (Ch 4:14) This places Esther in a precarious situation, risking death if she violates royal protocol (Ch 3 v 11). Nevertheless, she resolves to make her case to the King and calls her people to united prayer and fasting for 3 days! (Ch 4 v 16).

3. The God of Opportunity Esther Chs 5 - 10

As the story unfolds, Esther is successful, Haman is undone, Mordecai is exonerated and elevated, and the people are saved, and Jews celebrate this event (Purim) to this day. Esther is the only book in the Bible where God is not explicitly mentioned, but it is very evident that God is present and working all things for good – God seizes opportunities to preserve His people, even in exile. God is faithful to His covenant promise, and the people will survive to eventually see God's plan of salvation for the whole of humanity in the person of Jesus.

Reflection: How have you seen the purposes of God at work in your life when it seems all you see are obstacles?