



Assembly of
Confessing
Congregations

BELROSE UNITING CHURCH

Good News Quarterly

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We get knocked down, but we get up again ...

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.
(2 Corinthians 4:8 – 10)

So went the 1997 hit song for Chumbawambasentiments that echo Paul's experience in 2 Corinthians 4 as he recounts the hardships he endured in the course of his Gospel ministry.

Perhaps it may also resonate a bit with us over this year as we have endured many setbacks with the impact of the coronavirus. Just as we were getting some momentum in ministry and mission at the beginning of the year, we had to suspend services in March through to June. This was a difficult time – navigating what it meant to be the Church when we couldn't physically meet together. For many it was a disheartening time of social isolation and disconnection.

Then things looked to becoming a bit more positive and we resumed services in July, only to be advised to once again suspend services in August! What a disappointment!

While the hardships we have endured this year are not in the same league as what Paul and his missionary associates experienced for the sake of the Gospel, we nonetheless have felt knocked around a bit. But like Paul, we see the bigger picture of God's plans and God's faithfulness in sustaining us through the ups and downs.

Even Paul could see the positives in his suffering:

"We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." (2 Corinthians 4: 10, 11, 16, 17)

We continue to endure the hardships of this world and this life with hope. These may be challenging and anxious times, but we can have the confidence to believe that God knows when this pandemic will end. He is working out all things for good, and there is a glorious future in God's Kingdom awaiting believers.

In the meantime, we pray for patience, creativity, endurance and faithfulness as we seek to be the light and salt of the Kingdom of God, and a source of hope and comfort for our community.

Please stay safe, and may God bless you and renew you each day,

Rev. Ian Weeks

SUNDAY SERVICES ARE ON!

We are meeting again for worship on Sundays
(subject to Government restrictions and denominational advice)

every Sunday at 9.30 am and 5.30 pm



We will observe the appropriate Covid safety protocols of physical distancing, hand sanitizing, contact tracing recording, and we are strongly encouraged to wear a mask (available at the Welcome Desk). Sadly, the current restrictions don't allow for singing, but we can still praise God in our hearts and minds!

Good News Quarterly is the quarterly newsletter of the Belrose Uniting Church:

To Know Christ and Make Him Known!

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Do you remember the Presbytery Life and Witness Consultation?

At the end of 2019 the Presbytery sent a Life and Witness Consultation Team for a routine consultation. Earlier this year the Team submitted their report to Church Council containing a detailed account of their process and observations, much of which has been included in the Congregation Profile document. Thank you to those who took the opportunity to meet and talk with the Consultation Team.

The Consultation Report included the following summary and comments (*remember these were made at the end of 2019 and pre-Covid*):

AREAS TO BE AFFIRMED

1. We affirm that Belrose UC is a pastorally aware congregation. They are a close-knit family who pray for each other and offer practical support. The congregation is very warm and welcoming.
2. We acknowledge they have raised and trained their current children's leaders well, showing a willingness and ability to train up lay leaders.
3. We affirm the congregation's desire to make connections within the community with a view to sharing the Gospel with people who have not heard it. The opening of their premises to Probus Club gives potential for outreach.
4. The congregation has fostered connection with the local schools which bears fruit in the young people currently attending the youth group.
5. We also affirm the original vision that led to the building of the aged care and childcare centres on site.

AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. We want to encourage Belrose Uniting to further develop the lay leadership in their congregation.
2. We want to encourage the Congregation to consider closer links with the Uniting Aged Care and Child Care centres on their site as mission fields. Also, closer links with the zone and UCA networks such as Presbytery Young People Project (and Pulse) is advised. This is a two-way street. The Congregation used to have volunteer lay pastoral carers visiting Wesley Gardens until they were told by the ten Chaplain that they were no longer needed. Likewise, when Uniting took over control of the Pre-School, Congregation connection was severely restricted, and there have been numerous changes in the Director since then (about 4 in the last couple of years), however relationships with the current Director (appointed earlier this year) are very good and opportunities may arise.
3. Consider ways to foster greater links between the services. Sunday Lunches, picnics, camps, for example.
4. Consider the viability of the evening service in its current format. Can leadership capacity be developed to re-launch the evening service, with fresh vision and purpose? (*The Church Council has been looking at the mission, vision and format of the evening service.*)
5. Consideration strengthening the links BUC has to SRE programs to further build up the 10.30am family service. Given the young demographic of the youth group (late Primary school), can they strengthen and build the family service rather than attend the evening service? (*Since this report, the Family Service has dissolved and the Church Council is investigating alternative strategies for reaching families.*)
6. Find ways to use the congregation's strong hospitality gifts in mission. On the last NCLS Belrose UC reported 74% had a hospitality gift and when asked what kind of activity they would be most likely to invite friends or relatives to, most people said, a meal.
7. Ian Weeks currently bears a large administrative burden. Church Council might consider how identifying members of the congregation to share the load. (*Since the date of this Consultation, Anton Dykman has taken over as Chair of Church Council*)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To re-engage with Presbytery, Synod and the Assembly as a member of the Uniting Church: specifically forming closer links with the Zone and UCA networks such as Presbytery Young People Project (and Pulse) and increasing internal UCA training and conferences.
2. To reverse the decision not to contribute towards the Seeds of Growth contribution.
3. To investigate with Presbytery and Synod's assistance whether the childcare rental income is appropriate. (*The rental income has been negotiated with Uniting, the managers of the Pre-school.*)
4. To engage with the Business Committee regarding the financial situation of the Congregation. (*Since the date of this report, our Congregation finances are in a better position.*)

A SEASON FOR EVERYTHING

There is old fashioned farming word 'fallow'. The dictionary describes this as meaning when fields are "left unseeded for a season or more; uncultivated; inactive; so that the fertility and life giving quality of the soil can be restored."

I asked the German Baker at Narrabeen why I can eat his bread and not any others. He told me he imports his wheat from Germany. He says Australian farmers do not fallow their fields as they still do in Europe and that this has been detrimental to the crops and effects the bread.

I wondered about this natural law of God's nature and of seasons as the bible holds

3 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens

2 a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot.
Ecclesiastes 3:1-2

This is a most strange time for our church. It has been a time of shock and loss as wonderful members and whole families left. I understand some of these dear people had been coming to our Church for 20-30 years. This has also been a time of deep grief for some had to leave their homes for Aged care or have even lost their health or lives.

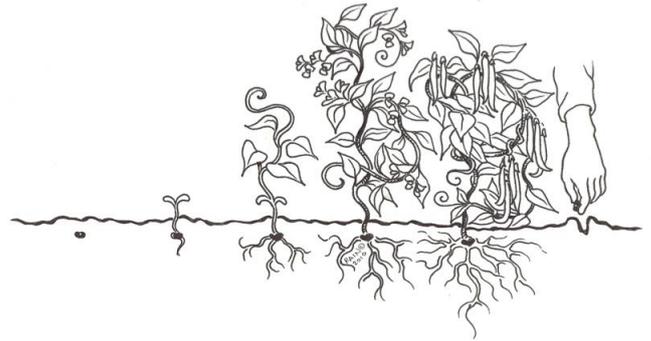
Then Covid hit to disrupt even our usual and comfortable ways of gathering and worshipping as His body and as a Church family. Covid has meant when we do get to meet it is behind masks and we can't raise our voices as one to worship our God. It seems odd to be spaced out as we seat and be unable to even shake hands. Some are still needing to isolate and not attend physically -but are with us in spirit. It can seem as if we are petering out, our numbers depleted.

I heard someone say that they were worried that our church was dying. I wondered, if instead, God has a plan for our church- as a time of fallow. A time of preparation for future great growth and vitality.

Can we trust God's plans for our Church? Can we use this time to earnestly pray and seek that "Thy Will be done"

Allison Pitt

ART POSSIBILITY: 'Seeds of Hope'



I have been thinking about our church's future. We are going through a time where we really need to ask God for guidance on how to grow and even thrive. How can we renew hope and be inspired to reach out to others and grow our church body? How we can be of more service to the area around us?

Recently I took a trip to the Biennale Art Exhibition at Cockatoo Island and was particularly inspired by an installation by the artist Tony Albert. With my questions mind I had an idea for an art project. I would invite you to think about a beautiful memory, something you are deeply grateful to God for. It might be when you had a prayer answered, held your new-born or gave your life to Christ.

In the future, I am planning to invite you to write these blessings onto pieces of paper that I have hand-made. We will then wrap individual beautiful native flower seeds in the paper and place them into soil. When they germinate we will plant the seedlings in the grounds of our church.

My hope is that these seeds will represent the good will and hopes of our church family and they will flourish.

Faith is powerful and even if the size of a mustard seed and relies on Jesus, his love and strength will enable us to rise above the most threatening of circumstances.

See Luke 17: 5-6

Venessa Crane

Belrose Uniting Church Preaching Plan August - October 2020

Sunday #	Date	9.30 am Service	Mission of the Month:
	August	Series: <i>Who is in control?</i>	Gyanankur English Medium School
1	2 nd	Rev. Ian Weeks Genesis 45:1 – 15 <i>Evil turned up-side down!</i>	
2	9 th	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks Ruth 4:9 – 22 <i>From Famine to Fortune!</i>	is an independent Indian school for Preschool to Year 10 in Kesnand, a village near Pune in India, 4 hours' drive southeast of Mumbai. All schools have been closed since April due to the virus pandemic, so learning is online.
3	16 th	Rev. Ian Weeks Esther 4:1 – 7 <i>The opportunist God?</i>	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 administration.
4	23 rd	Rev. Ian Weeks Acts 4:23 – 31 <i>A Higher Authority!</i>	Gyanankur's core values are: 1. Joy: School should be fun! 2. Service: not to be served, but to serve. 3. Transparency: lives and relationships marked by openness and honesty. 4. Dignity: everyone is treated with respect.
5	30 th	Rev. Ian Weeks Revelation 19:1 – 16 <i>King of Kings!</i>	These are 4 counter-cultural values for India, where discrimination based on one's colour or status & bribery are normal.
	September	Series: <i>Daniel – Standing Firm in a Culture of Compromise</i>	Pioneers – Graham & Sarah Edwardes in Ireland
1	<i>Fathers' Day</i> 6 th 9.30 AM	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>What's in a name?</i> Daniel Ch 1	Pioneers mobilises teams to glorify God among unreached peoples by initiating church planting movements in partnership with local churches.
2	13 th 9.30 AM Congregation Meeting	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Uncompromising Prayer</i> Daniel Ch 2	<i>Their passion is to glorify God throughout the nations of the world, through obedience to the Bible and by living and proclaiming the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. It is an act of worship to actively participate in some way in the Great Commission.</i>
3	20 th 9.30 AM	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Uncompromising Worship</i> Daniel Ch 3	Some cultures in the world have no neighbours who can tell them about Jesus Christ. Pioneers' hope is to share God's love with those people in places where the gospel is yet to be effectively proclaimed.
4	27 th 9.30 AM	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Uncompromising Counsel</i> Daniel Ch 4	BUC partners with Graham & Sarah Edwardes, with their children Sydney & Enzo, who are sharing the Gospel in Ireland.
	October	Series: <i>Daniel – Standing Firm in a Culture of Compromise</i>	Open Doors – Serving The Persecuted Church
1	4 th 9.30 AM	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Uncompromising Witness</i> Daniel Ch 5	<i>Open Doors believes that</i> * all doors are open & God enables his Body to go into all the world & preach the Gospel; * caring for the persecuted church should be part of the DNA of every Christian.
2	11 th 9.30 AM	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Uncompromising Faith</i> Daniel Ch 6	<i>Their Mission: to strengthen and prepare Christians living in persecution, and to mobilise the Australian church to identify with the global body of Christ.</i>
3	18 th 9.30 AM	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Uncompromising Plans</i> Daniel Chs 7 - 9	Open Doors partners with Christians and local churches in Australia. Our support enables believers living in some of the darkest places on Earth to be a light for Christ.
4	25 th 9.30 AM	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Uncompromising Kingdom</i> Daniel Chs 10 - 12	<i>Open Doors' mission is to make sure that the persecuted church is remembered in every church, every Bible study, and every home.</i>