



Assembly of
Confessing
Congregations

BELROSE UNITING CHURCH

Good News Quarterly

Issue #123

February 2021

Joys and Heartaches - Trusting God in the Good and Bad Times

What a joy it has been to be able to worship together again after yet another period of Covid lockdown. Despite not being able to sing as a Congregation in our services, there is still great blessing in meeting physically as we have the opportunity to share together in fellowship, opening up God's Word, and joining our hearts in prayer.



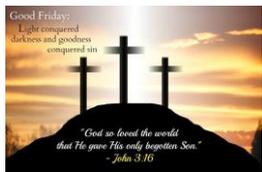
But it hasn't been easy. It has required patience and perseverance as we have endured masks, physical distancing, unable to sing the songs, the uncertainty of not knowing if, or when, the next lockdown will occur, missing those friends who are unable to attend church yet, and not having morning tea every week. These may seem trivial concerns to some, but for many of us they are at the heart of what it means to be the church: the people of God meeting together, caring for one another, greeting each other with warmth & affection, sharing prayer needs, and singing praise to our wonderful God.

As we open up the Old Testament Book of Job this term, we will explore the challenge it is to trust God in the hard and testing times. The first two chapters of Job make troubling reading as we witness Job's suffering. In Chapter 3, Job calls out to God with the anguished cry of "Why?!" A cry that I'm sure we have all echoed at some stage as we have suffered, or seen others suffer.

The big questions that Job asks: "Why do the innocent suffer?" and, "Where are you God?" will be explored as we work through this challenging book in the Morning Services. In the Evening Services, we will explore Luke's historical account of the life, words, actions, death and resurrection of Jesus.

In Jesus we see these piercing questions that Job asks being answered as we move towards Easter – remembering that in Jesus' unjust arrest, torture and death we see God in Christ suffering with us.

Ian Weeks



Jesus the Suffering Servant: Remembering and Celebrating the Amazing Love of God for us at Easter 2021

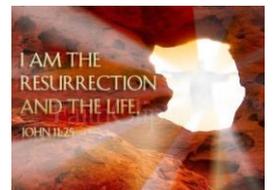
Palm Sunday 28th March - the beginning of Easter Week

Thursday 1st April – Maundy Thursday Service at 6.30 pm

Friday 2nd April – Good Friday Service at 9.00 am

Resurrection Sunday 4th April – Easter Sunday Celebration Services at 9.30 am & 5.30 pm

"Death could not hold Him down, He is risen!"



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

To Know Christ and Make Him Known!

2 Morgan Road (Corner of Forest Way & Morgan Road), Belrose 2085

Editor: Venessa Crane 0433 862 674 venessac@tpg.com.au

Pastor: Rev. Ian Weeks 0408 308 196 mail@belrose.unitingchurch.org.au



Baptism of Paula Piukala

What a blessing it was to celebrate the baptism of Paula, youngest son of Tim & Lily, on 17th Jan 2021. A wonderful way to usher in brand new year after coming out of Covid lockdown!

Thank you to the Piukala families for providing such a wonderful feast of morning tea for us all to enjoy.



Tim, Carlos, Amelia (Mia), Paula, Lily and Sebastian (Loma) Piukala with Paula's baptism cake and gifts of family candles for the congregation.

Partnering with Missionaries in the service of the Good News about Jesus

Recently we have had the opportunity to hear from, and pray for some of our mission partners.

Please continue to pray for them as they serve the Lord on our behalf.



**Bruce Cox and
Kathy Cummins**
serving with
Wycliffe Bible
Translators

**MISSION
OF THE
MONTH**

Bruce & Kathy have finally returned to Africa – this time: Nigeria!

Please pray for their quarantine and orientation in Jos in February, travel to and help at the Luke Partnership workshop on 8-26 March in Ikom, and their continued Bible translation work in the Iceve language.

Also pray for somewhere for them to live and settle and how to go about the language work from Ogoja after that.

Pray also for them and their families not to be anxious (Ph 4:6).



Ministry with First Nations People at Nungalingya College, Darwin

Wayne Oldfield and Mandy Jones have completed their ten-year service at Nungalingya College in Darwin. Wayne has been one of the Dean of Students (responsible for student welfare), and Mandy has been teaching theological and ministry courses at the College.

Their time in Darwin has been challenging as they work with students who speak languages from many different indigenous communities. But it also been fruitful as they have witnessed students growing in faith and returning to their communities as Christian leaders.

Pray for them as they seek God's leading for the next phase of life after College. You can follow the college on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/nungalingya/>

A Wake-Up Call?

God is using the internet in wonderful ways to reach new believers and to strengthen those who already know Him. There are many resources available online to answer our questions, dispel our doubts and fears, or reinforce our beliefs. There are also challenges, or words of warning, which God may be issuing to our established church.



In one online video, an ex-Muslim, Ramin Parsa, shares his journey from Islam to Christianity – from the strict regime of Iran, to the “freedom” of America.

He begins by relating the story of his conversion. Despite a strong love for Allah and a devout Muslim upbringing, a series of sad events in his life left him feeling desolate, depressed and in darkness. He knew of Jesus as simply a person, but his curiosity to learn more came from a television program which miraculously broke through the restrictions in Iran.

Close to suicide, he challenged Jesus to prove His reality. He describes how a huge burden was immediately lifted. Then, he felt “on fire for God”, with an urgency to share his experience. Those around him noticed a huge change. Based on this, most of his family also came to Jesus. It is amazing that God made all of this happen without providing any access to a Bible. With an insatiable appetite, Ramin started looking for the written Word. Christian websites were blocked, but he eventually found the four gospels.

He was living in great danger and, at age nineteen, God led him safely out of the country into Turkey. Here, God took him into a church for the first time. It was totally different from anything he had experienced before. How could worship be so joyful and loving? He was so excited that he could not get enough of it. For the first time, he was able to see and read the rest of the New Testament. Attending services required much effort and risk – gathering wood for heating, walking long distances in the cold and snow, and warding off the threats of attack and closure. Ramin was arrested on several occasions.

Yet the church was vibrant with worship services, Bible Studies and prayer meetings. While he was there, it grew from 50 members to 150 – all ex-Muslims. For these new Christians, the church was vital to their welfare and existence because it was “all they had”.

God then worked another miracle by fast-tracking his passage as a refugee to America. Alarmingly, God issued a warning to him on the aircraft – “be careful, do not lose your fire and passion”. There had been no such warnings in Iran and Turkey, despite the obvious dangers. God was talking about another threat, and it became immediately obvious when he arrived.

People were very casual about Christianity. It seemed they had never had any real need to rely fully on God - to fall humbly on their knees and pray. There was little reliance on the power of prayer. There was a big reluctance to share the gospel. Even church life was half-hearted. People didn't come if it was raining, or they complained if the service lasted more than an hour. Yet, they would spend long periods at the movies! Buildings were closed for most of the week. People had to be begged to attend worship. They purchased magazines rather than Bibles. They had enough welfare and comforts to satisfy their needs.

Many churches had no fire. This was such a contrast for him. He had experienced God's complete faithfulness in bringing him to belief and then fully sustaining him through so many trials. Even worse, he saw God being taken out of government, schools and public places. The church was also weakening and bending to what the people wanted.

Is God sending us a message through the testimony of this man?

He is just one of many who have felt God's power in turning their beliefs completely around. God has worked profound transformations in their lives. We see God producing amazing fruits through such people. His grace has such an impact that they are prepared to give up everything and rely completely on Him. They become strong, dedicated followers. They have an unquenchable hunger to gain more knowledge and share it. They defend their faith with boundless courage and conviction.

Ramin's face glows with joy as he relates his love for Jesus and celebrates the miracle of his new life in Christ. “Hallelujah!” he affirms, over and over, during the accounts of his struggles.

Let us reflect on Ramin's story and ask ourselves - what might we do differently in our church if it was “all we had”? Perhaps there is a “wake-up” call here. Is God saying to His church, “*be careful, do not lose your fire and passion*”?

His website is www.raminparsa.org

Allan Leslie

Belrose Uniting Church Preaching Plan February – April 2021

	Date	9.30 am Morning Church	5.30 pm Evening Church	MISSION OF THE MONTH
	February	Job: <i>The Suffering Servant</i>	Luke: <i>Meeting the Real Jesus</i>	Bruce Cox & Kathy Cummins
1	7 th	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>New Year's Resolutions</i> #3 "Patient Urgency" 2 Peter 3:9 - 18	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Meeting the Real Jesus</i> #3 <i>The Perfect Human</i> Luke 4:1 - 13	Serving in Nigeria, Africa with Wycliffe Bible Translators
2	14 th	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks #1 <i>God's Servant Tested</i> Job 1 - 3	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks #4 <i>The compassion of Jesus</i> Luke 5:12 - 32	Bruce & Kathy have finally returned to Africa – this time: Nigeria! Please pray for their quarantine and orientation in Jos in February, then finding a home in Ogoja in Cross River State.
3	21 st Lent 1 Morning Tea	Rev. Ian Weeks #2 <i>Why do the innocent suffer?</i> John 9:1 – 12 & Job 4 – 14	Rev. Ian Weeks #5 <i>The Mission of Jesus</i> Luke 7:1 - 17	Please pray also for their travel to, and help with, <i>The Luke Partnership</i> workshop in March (8-26th) in Ikom.
4	28 th Lent 2	Rev. Ian Weeks #3 <i>I know that my Redeemer lives!</i> Job 15 – 21	Rev. Ian Weeks #6 <i>Jesus the Christ</i> Luke 9:18 - 36	We are privileged to be able to support them financially and prayerfully as they continue the Bible translation work in the Iceve language, focussing on Luke's gospel.
	March			Providing Youth Discipleship and Training Opportunities
1	7 th Lent 3	Rev. Ian Weeks #4 <i>The great justice of God</i> Job 22 - 31	Rev. Ian Weeks #7 <i>Jesus the Word</i> Luke 10:25 - 42	Enabling teens and young adults to attend discipleship and training camps/events.
2	14 th Lent 4	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks #5 <i>God is great!</i> Job 32 – 37	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks #8 <i>Jesus the Searcher</i> Luke 15:1 – 32	Part of our mission as a Congregation is to be training and equipping people for ministry. As we identify youth, young adults and others for ministry with families and children, we want to make sure we can resource them for these tasks.
3	21 st Lent 5 Morning Tea	Rev. Ian Weeks #6 <i>The great wisdom of God</i> Job 38 - 42	Rev. Ian Weeks #9 <i>Jesus the Teacher</i> Luke 18:9 - 30	
4	28 th Palm Sunday	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Welcoming the Suffering Servant!</i> Matthew 21:1 – 17	Rev. Ian Weeks #10 <i>Jesus the King</i> Luke 19:28 - 44	
	April			The Forest Association for Christian Education Inc (FACE)
	1 st Maundy Thursday	9.30 am Service		The Churches of the Forest providing SRE (Scripture) in our local High Schools
	2 nd Good Friday	9.00 am Service		What a privilege it is to be able to go into our local Schools and teach students about Jesus. We partner with other local Churches in funding Henri Simpson and his team to go every week into Davidson High and The Forest High Schools.
1	4 th Easter Sunday	Rev. Ian Weeks <i>Encountering the Risen King</i> Matthew 28:1 – 15	Rev. Ian Weeks #11 <i>Jesus the Risen Lord</i> Luke 24:1 - 12	
2	11 th	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks <i>The Mission of the King</i> Matthew 28: 16 – 20	The Lord's Supper Rev. Ian Weeks #12 <i>Jesus the Real Lord</i> Luke 24:13 - 53	 <p>Through FACE in our High Schools we have a wonderful mission field, which happens if we give and pray!</p>
3	18 th Morning Tea	TBA	TBA	
4	25 th ANZAC Day	Rev. Ian Weeks TBA	TBA	

Henri Simpson