

Crows Nest Uniting Church

Keeping Connected

Sunday 18 October 2020



Welcome to this week's edition of *Keeping Connected*

Church service 10.00am Sunday 18 October

Return to the Church building and Zoom Church

On **Sunday 18 October**, the Church will be open for services (providing there are no new NSW Department of Health notifications to the contrary). We encourage you to come to the safe space. We just remind you of a few rules

- please DO NOT come if you are feeling at all unwell
- use the hand sanitiser provided in the porch
- bring your mask and wear it
- sit on the crosses taped to the pews and do not remove them please
- do not sing

We will need more people to volunteer for the roster as we return to the building. So please respond to this call (see Roster Schedule on page 2).

Our service will continue to be available on Zoom each Sunday for those of you who do not feel you want to return to the Church at this time.

Zoom Service Details

Join our Zoom services by clicking [here](#), using the Meeting ID (952 541 571) and Password (016529) if prompted. If you are unable to connect over the link above, you will be able to listen to the service by phone by dialling 02 8015 6011 and following the instructions.

Email address – please note!!

Our church office email address has changed to office@crowsnestuniting.org.au. Please update our email address in your records. Do not use the old address as it no longer works. Please contact us if you need further information.

Lectionary Readings



The readings for this week are:

Exodus 33:12-23

Psalm 99

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Matthew 22:15-33

This Sunday **18 October** – Preacher and Leader: Rev Michael Thomas

Reader: Gill Glen, Prayer Leader: Anu Selvarajah, Vestry Prayer: Bev Cameron,

Welcomer: Gill Glen, Counting Offerings: Anu Selvarajah +1,

Kids Alive: Deb Lee, Flowers: Lorna Bassett

Roster Schedule

25 October - Reader: Julie Newton, Prayer Leader: Bev Cameron, Vestry Prayer: Bev Cameron, Welcomer: Julie Newton, Counting Offerings: Anu Selvarajah +1, Kids Alive: Deb Lee, Flowers: Lorna Bassett

1 November - Reader: +1, Communion Elder & Prayer Leader: Lin Gourlay, Vestry Prayer: Bev Cameron, Welcomer: Lin Gourlay, Counting Offerings: +2, Kids Alive: Deb Lee, Flowers: +1

Youth Group resuming

The Friday evening Youth Group will resume on Friday 23rd October

Baptism

On Sunday 1 November we will be baptising Adam Konrad Dworniczak. Given the delays caused by Covid 19 this will be an especially meaningful celebration!

Weekly Offertory

With COVID19 disrupting our normal church life it is suggested that your offering be made by way of direct transfer to the Church's bank account. The details are as follows:

Bank A/C Name: Crows Nest Uniting Church Giving Direct

BSB: 634 634

Account No.: 100031537

Bruce and Bev – sale of goods

Bruce and Bev have (like many of us) had a sort out in their house. They have some items for sale and they ask that if anyone would like them, please make a suitable donation to the Church bank account – you will need to label the donation ‘Bev’s sale’. The photos of the items are attached separately.

Savouring the Flavour of Life - Written by Bev Cameron -

‘I did but see her passing by, yet I will love her till I die,’ – these are words former Prime Minister Robert Menzies used when making a speech to the Queen when she first visited Australia. We’ll never know if the Prime Minister was genuinely swept away by the Queen’s aura as he gazed at her or if he was making the most of a chance to ingratiate himself with her. But we know of other similar stories which may be less ambiguous: for instance, the Renaissance author Dante Alighieri when he caught sight of the beautiful Beatrice, was so carried away by the sight of her that Beatrice became his model for characters in his famous writings even though the two never met again.

My point is that every moment of ordinary life can be seen to be rich with special, even sacred meaning - full of spiritual meaning if only we have the eyes to see. Jesus himself says: ‘Let anyone with ears to hear, listen,’ [Mk 4:23] and he asks, ‘Do you have eyes and fail to see? Do you have ears and fail to hear?’ [Mk 8:18] and finally, [‘What I say to you, I say to all, “Keep awake!” [Mk 13:37]

Just recently, I noticed an item on my screen encouraging the viewer to take time to observe momentary and unexpected events of special beauty or appeal in the midst of ordinary life and to commit that small observation to memory so it could be recalled and savoured at a later time.

I have also heard Catholic Franciscan Priest, Fr Richard Rohr advise much the same thing, only he says to simply observe the event for at least 15 seconds before letting our attention move away because we need that length of time to commit the moment to memory for later recall.

The point of both observations is to remind us that today’s ordinary everyday life, even for those who have retired or are unemployed, can be rushed and stressful. We experience vast amounts of stimulation coming in to our minds all the time and this makes it very difficult to stay in the moment. In being held constantly mentally busy, we lose touch not only with ourselves but with the transcendent world unavailable to the passing glance. So it becomes important to rediscover inner stillness to put us back in touch with that world. We can do this at least in part by stopping to pay attention to and savouring the world around us. Pausing to notice small events happening around us is a way to reduce anxiety immediately and also to provide at the very least, some pleasant moments for reflection at the end of the day. And even better than that, these experiences can become a focus for thanksgiving for the blessings of life, or to reality, or to the universal consciousness or to God – whichever your view of what is ultimate might be.

It goes without saying that such quiet reflection later in the day on the small but lovely or fascinating events we come across is a fine way into meditation. More prosaically, recalling to mind those events which make us smile in wonder and delight can be a very useful antidote to those times when we can’t sleep in the middle of the night. That 2.00 – 3.00 a.m. wakefulness is often supercharged with anxiety as we worry about all kinds of issues, past, present and not even here yet and about which – at that moment – we can do nothing. How much more calming and positive it can be to recall the good things!

But going further than that, I would suggest that experiencing such ordinary/extraordinary moments through our senses as we relate to perhaps a beautiful sunset; the song of a bird at dawn; the taste of a meal lovingly prepared; the perfume of a dry landscape suddenly wet with rain or the silky feel of a newborn’s skin are also reminders that God is in everything. Our response of awe or delight is but a reminder of that divine mystery which surrounds us.

And if we walk this rediscovered path with God as our companion and become newly aware that it is in God that we live and move and have our being, who knows where our path will lead us. It may not be

to writing famous novels, or becoming influential leaders or martyrs for a cause, but we may become a source of hope, courage and new life to those we meet.

Now, while our chances of having a major life-change may be limited, we may have had a moment which gave a silver lining to the clouds of our day or even changed us in some way. Let's think about that and give thanks.



Bruce savours the delights of the 2018 Begonia Festival in Ballarat Botanic Gardens

Alison Sandow Memories - written stories still sought.

Last chance!!!. On the Sunday following her passing, we had a delightful conversation on Zoom about the much-loved Alison Sandow. People told stories of her extraordinary contribution to Crows Nest Uniting Church and to their lives. We would very much appreciate the chance to assemble these stories and present them to Alison's grieving family. Thank you to those who have already provided stories. Any church member with a story of how Alison made an impact on them is invited to provide a written version of their story by next **Sunday 25 October**. Any questions? Please contact Michael or Lin.



Alison Sandow – a minister’s perspective

I have been a minister of the Uniting Church for more than 33 years in four different congregations. During that time I have encountered some incredible people, including captains of industry, professors, business leaders and ordinary people achieving extraordinary things. Our recently deceased friend Alison is at least as impressive as any of those.

I first met Alison in her usual pew in the Crows Nest church. Dressed beautifully and with a winsome smile, it was an introduction to remember. She was bright, vital and engaging; it seemed scarcely possible that she was nearly one hundred. I was soon a guest in her home enjoying a cup of tea, a delicious home-baked biscuit or three and fantastic conversation. Her recall of events and people was amazing, and we soon discovered that we knew people in common and that we shared a similar outlook on life. She was knowledgeable about current affairs, art, music and just about anything involving people.

Early on I was struck by her excellent and wicked sense of humour and her self-deprecating anecdotes. She never forgot a single story that I told her and often referenced facts that I had revealed in later chats. A visit to her home always left me with a heart bursting with life and energy. It surprised me that someone of her age and with her health troubles and family complexities could warm my heart in such a way. Alison’s interest in and contribution to the lives of so many people was deep, rich, and full.

The November 2018 service on the 100th anniversary of the Armistice stands out in my mind as an astounding Alison memory. She was present in the church and made it clear that she was “in utero” on the day we were remembering. That link with such a momentous day by someone who was there with us made the commemoration all the more powerful.

Alison’s 100th birthday celebration in May 2019 at the church was an event that I will never forget. She was resplendent in her blue dress and dazzled us all with her conversation and interest in, and love of those who had gathered. That such an elderly person could draw such a crowd was a testament to her character, and I was delighted that a noise complaint came from a neighbour. Very few of us would draw such a crowd or be capable of such energy at our 70th birthdays, let alone at our 100th! Our local Federal member, Trent Zimmerman, was charmed by Alison and actually accused her of being a fraud, asking to be introduced to Alison’s mother whose birthday we must be celebrating. Afterwards to me, he explained that he attended many such functions, very few for a centenarian still living in her own home, almost none with such mental acuity and grace.

Throughout our friendship Alison and I talked about significant matters. As her health declined, she wanted to affirm the role that her faith played in her life, giving strength in her struggles. She was confident in God’s love for her and in the fact that she was happy to pass from this world into the next. She maintained a delight in the fact that she had lived a wonderful life and that she was proud of what she had achieved, with family and church and community. Her intelligence came out in every conversation.

At the very end of her life she was stunning. Covid-19 meant very few people were able to visit her in person, but I am honoured and humbled to have been able to continue to do so on behalf of her church friends and family. She was brave, clear-headed and confounded her medical team and her family by living on and being cogent for an almost ridiculous amount of time. One of the highlights of my ministry will be the day that I was unable to visit the dying woman, being treated palliatively, because she was down in the common area playing bingo! When I visited her later that day, just a couple of days before her death, I was saddened to notice that she had been unable to read her precious copy of the ‘Sydney Morning Herald’. Only weeks before she had lost her capacity to knock over the crossword, which was a sign to all that she was failing.

Vale Alison – you were one in 25 million and you will be sadly missed by your church community and by all who loved you. Hopefully, we can honour your legacy by trying to live lives claiming at least some of your values, interests, and qualities. - Michael Thomas, October 2020 -

Insights Spring 2020

The spring issue has arrived in the office. Copies will be available in the church foyer on 18 October, or please arrange with Lin to pick up a copy.

With Love to the World

The WLTW for August – October have arrived in the office. Please speak to Michael to secure your copy.

Further Reading

Rev John Squires:

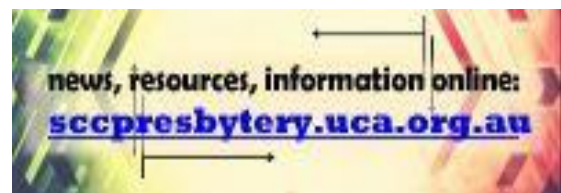
<https://johntsqires.com/>

The Christian Century:

https://www.christiancentury.org/article/first-person/pandemic-calls-closed-hymnals?fbclid=IwAR0NF2biBGzRzg_w6nELemW7OhbCRLqOtwEwp8vM1x9jIvWIywCvKSI3fU

Sydney Central Coast Presbytery Weekly News

Here is a link to The Presbytery weekly news:



Please send items for this news sheet to Gaiklin before Thursday each week

PLEASE MAKE CONTACT WITH ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE OR ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN FUTURE EDITIONS OF 'KEEPING CONNECTED'

Office hours: Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10.00am till 2.00pm.

email: office@crowstnuniting.org.au

Phone: Gaiklin 94396033

Phone: Michael Thomas 0407 281486, email: thomasmichael310@gmail.com

We worship and live on land that is sacred to and has been cared for by people of the Cammeraygal and Wallumedgal clans, part of the Kuringgai tribe. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

**Spirited
Community**