



WINTER 2021

PARTICIPATE

IN LIFE • IN CHRIST

Welcome to the Internet!

“Could I interest you in everything and anything all of the time?”

When I go on Facebook the reality of the above song lyrics are there right on my phone. If I do a quick scroll of my feed, I will see photos of a friend's birthday party, next to an invitation to join a discussion group to find the “truth” about vaccines, next to an advert for Coca-Cola, next to a cat video, next to a picture of the winner of the Olympic 100m, next to a post sharing the pain of being without a passed loved one for a decade. Everything and anything all of the time.

While initial concerns of the effects of the internet were often targeted at younger people, we are seeing that people of all ages are challenged by this new environment. I am told in my visits to churches, stories of friends or family members who have become obsessed with conspiracy theories or hate filled discourse they have engaged with online. While we all have our own ideas, the internet acts as rocket fuel for single-issue causes and polarising our opinions.

Wendell Berry's essay “Why I am not going to buy a computer” called out the above challenges many years ago. Wendell still does not own a computer (I checked. I asked Google and the New Yorker had spoken with him in July 2019 - everything and anything all of the time!). Like Wendell we can choose to not participate, Christians have a long history of monastic style withdrawal and separation from the culture of the day. For many of us this is not possible or not preferred. While the internet presents many challenges it also brings many opportunities.

The content of my preaching and sharing with churches this year has come out of my readings from the book of Acts in the New Testament. Acts begins with the followers of Jesus receiving the Holy Spirit, the presence of God with us. The Spirit led the Acts community into engagement with the world around them. Rather than withdrawal, there is an ever increasing contact with the culture of the day. But, this newly formed group of Jesus followers who became known as Christians were not consumed by the culture around them, even while being called to engage with it. For, as the spirit led them into cultural engagement, it was also forming the Christians within communities that shared and contemplated the teachings of Jesus and remembered the death and resurrection of Jesus. It was in this shared space that love, compassion and grace-filled relationships could be developed.

The practices of the early church remain relevant to our church communities today. Alone, we can be side-tracked and influenced, convinced of our own expertise and wisdom. At risk of being lost down a rabbit hole of the endless content of the internet feeding our doubts and insecurities. This is less likely to occur in open and healthy communities. Communities where we share our ideas while connected with each other and together through the work of the Holy Spirit connected to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Peter Barney State Minister

News and stories from Churches of Christ in South Australia

Point Sturt Celebrates 160 Years



The first meeting at Point Sturt was in the tent home of William Crawford in 1855. A Church was then built, opening in 1861, free of debt. David Mann supervised the construction of the building and also built the cedar seats. The slate roof which still remains was the work of James Crabb Verco. An organ was purchased in 1925.

Baptisms were performed in the lake. In 1868 there were 53 scholars in the Sunday School.

In 1900 it was considered acceptable for a wage



of 104 pounds per year for a married man and 80 pounds per year for a single man.

There will be a service at this well maintained building on August 22nd at 2.00pm. Grant Simpson will be the speaker and Daryll Telfer is leading the service. Although not in regular use for many years, we are still celebrating 160 years of the faithful witness of this Church.

Enquiries and registrations for attendance can be made to Carolyn Yelland 0412 499 302.

Hub Service a New Initiative at Modbury

Churches of Christ, Modbury, Inc., are embarking on a new community-focus initiative. A recent church-conducted survey of the local community described an area with a high percentage of senior/elderly residents, a slow influx of people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and a large proportion of people living alone. It was evident that social isolation and loneliness are prevalent in the community, especially amongst elderly residents. The area has a number and diversity of local churches, Christian schools and community aid/mission programmes, providing many resources to meet practical community welfare needs in the area. However, despite the large number of public and community programmes available in Modbury, communication between the organisations in the area could be improved, so that people seeking assistance are directed to the best support services for their circumstances. The new initiative at Modbury is to establish a hub service that networks with the other local churches and services, connecting people to the

help they need and accompanying them as they access that help. Help with accessing Centrelink, My Aged Care or the NDIS, which is a complex and daunting process for most people, is also something that will be offered.

A maritime pilot is a navigational expert whose role is to guide ships through dangerous or congested waters. The pilot has expert knowledge of the waterway and its hazards, and boards the vessel before it enters the waterway to stand next to the helmsman and guide the ship safely to its destination. This is the essence of the planned hub – to have a pool of volunteers, experts in navigating the help available, who will come alongside those needing to access the help and act as guides and companions through the process. The hub service envisaged will not just direct people to appropriate help, but walk alongside them, demonstrating “The kingdom of God has come near to you” through friendship, compassion and care.

Responding to Cudlee Creek's Bushfire Tragedy



What a devastating Christmas it was for those in the path of the 20th December 2019 Cudlee Creek bushfire as it tore a path of destruction through the Adelaide Hills. Within a 127 km perimeter, the fire destroyed 87 homes and 500 other buildings along with livestock, pets, crops, vineyards and vehicles. People in the fire's path hastily evacuated. Power was cut for five days to the area, and many who could return to their homes faced both outdoor and indoor clean-up challenges that included cleaning and restocking all the items in their fridges and freezers.

Across Australia, people generously responded to the Bushfire Emergency Appeal launched by Global Mission Partners Extend (GMP). GMP contacted Lenswood Church of Christ and asked if they could reach out to people impacted and distribute relief. Walter and Roger from Lenswood Church volunteered. They collected vouchers purchased from local businesses, and spent countless hours making house to house visits, hearing (and seeing) stories of heartbreaking devastation. "Many shared stories and showed

us around their properties. Some were overwhelmed, some emotional and all were grateful to receive vouchers. They asked us to thank GMP and the church." Some used their vouchers to replace tools they had lost, purchase a whipper snipper to help with the clean-up, or purchased roses and fruit trees as a reminder of people's generosity in their darkest hour.

One of the Thank You cards read, "We would like to thank you very much for your kind donation to our family. It is not only very generous but also very practical and gratefully received. The bushfire tore through our property and even though our house was unscathed, the experience turned out to be more traumatic than we would've expected. What we lost brought up a lot of mixed feelings which are taking some time to process. But one of them was a strange feeling that, because our house was intact, we are less deserving of assistance and less entitled to grieve because other people around us may be worse off. When we received the voucher from Walter and Roger, these feelings immediately fell away and we felt very loved and supported."

After the first round of vouchers were distributed, contact was made with the Lobethal Recovery Centre to see if more support would help. Walter collected vouchers from Lobethal Fodder Store, DJ Growers, Mitre 10, Klose's Supermarket and Wallis Cinemas and dropped them back at the Centre.

A total of \$49,000 was distributed in vouchers to the local communities. When Ali, the Manager at Lobethal Recovery Centre, sent through her report of those assisted she wrote, "Thank you again for your wonderful donations; this has assisted so many families in need. They have been extremely well received by the community." Walter wrote in his summary report, "Our thanks is extended to all the generous GMP donors who made all this possible. We know it has been a real encouragement and made a great difference in many lives." The SA Premier sent a letter of thanks for the donations and assistance given.

So, thank you, to everyone who contributed, for your part in the story of love, care and healing for this community. It is appreciated.

“Ask not what your church can do for you...”

Participating in local Ministry

Glenys Sauturaga
Tumby Bay



I'm not sure why we call it a Sunday Morning Service. Perhaps this is unhelpful language in a culture of high expectations, where we are used to receiving personalised phone plans, with companies marketing to us constantly; 'Go on, buy it! You deserve the best!' And business groups and agencies providing professional service.

When I 'go to church' I spend most of my time serving others. Actually, upon reflection, that is the reason I'm still part of Tumby Bay Church of Christ. In other church settings it's not the done thing to be up the front as a female... Here, I'm able to use the gifts God has given me and to serve with a team using their gifting also. There are many needs and plenty of opportunities.

Maika and I were married in 2013 and were invited to attend. We immediately helped lower the average age, furthermore with our own two children, and also by inviting students from the SUPA (Scripture Union Primary Age) Club to come to Kids Church (twice a month). Previously the Congregational Meetings were very, very long. There was no agenda. Minutes were hand written, if we could locate them. Financial reports were typed on a typewriter! Amongst other things we now have a Leadership Team, a new printer and a part time Pastor!

But these are just the structures, tools and roles required to get a bit organised and move forward in ministry.

Our congregation has been a very patient group who allow me to try new ideas. I've resisted running a separate Children's Ministry. Kids Church are involved in fundraising, up front with reading and explaining what we are learning about, including a clip or new song for everyone to experience. Kids Church helps serve Communion, and enjoy making coffee for the adults. Their questions and spiritual growth are inspiring.

There have been many faithful and generous givers over the years, and some risks taken. Weekly prayer meetings and Bible Study are important. There is a place for discerning and decisive leadership, but we also have a culture of listening to everyone's opinion. This might mean things take a lo-o-o-ng time to happen, but when they do the relationships can stay intact.

As a tourist location, there are often visitors who are invited to introduce themselves during our worship time and stay for a cuppa. The sharing of their stories and journey as they pass through our town is encouraging.

We could probably be more consistent with our Sunday morning service style. It's about time we upgraded the kitchen and painted the hall. But the important thing is that we want to meet together. Prayers for Others and morning tea takes up most of our time because, though we are not a large congregation, we are connecting and serving each other in ways that go beyond Sunday morning - and can't really be measured.