



# Bathurst Uniting Church

Sharing God's love by connecting people to God;  
people to people; and people to community.

Newsletter

May, 2024

## Reflection The present tense

Sam Wells makes a remarkable and provocative statement. He says there is no such thing as the present tense. Having got the readers attention, he then says that many people are subject of two primal terrors. The first terror is that we cannot stop time. The second terror is we cannot undo what we have done.

He then goes on to say that these two terrors – the panic about the past and fear of the future-together constitute the prison of human existence. The imprisonment prevents genuine living in the present tense because lives are dominated to overflowing with regret and bitterness about the past and paralysed by fear and anxiety about the future.

We can think about what grieves us. It is what happened in the past that we can't change, a sequence of events that leads to a kind of prison with the person in some sense in chains. It is also what we cherish which we dread we cannot keep in the future – youth, physical and or intellectual prowess, things and people we love, even this very moment right now.

That leads Sam Wells to claim two convictions about Christianity: one about the past, and one about the future, which leads to a statement about the present.

A conviction at the core of the Christian faith is about the past. It is forgiveness. Forgiveness does not change the things that cause regret or bitterness, but forgiveness releases us from the hold or the power of the past over us. Forgiveness does not rewrite our past, but it does prevent our past from what Sam Wells calls "asphyxiating us." "Forgiveness transforms our past from an enemy to a friend, from a horror-show of shame to a storehouse of wisdom." Forgiveness is like being released from a prison. Sam Wells says "forgiveness is half of Christianity."

The second conviction is about the future. The future includes issues of death and beyond death, as well as the things (illness, loss) that decline to death. The second conviction of Christianity is everlasting life. Everlasting life does not take away the unknown elements of the future but, says Sam Wells, it does take away the outburst of fear that engulfs the cloud of unknowing. "Everlasting life doesn't dismantle the reality of death, bereavement but it does offer life beyond death, comfort beyond suffering, companionship beyond

### Worship Services

#### 9.30am in the church.

You can join worship on Zoom by going to

<http://www.bathurstunitingchurch.com.au/> and pressing the purple button.

5 May Rev Keith Hamilton Holy Communion

12 May Monday Morning Bible Study Group – Mother's Day

19 May Rev Keith Hamilton

26 May Rev Keith Hamilton

2 June Rev Keith Hamilton Holy Communion

#### 'Sunday @ 5'

At 5pm – contemporary, informal, all ages worship in the Activities Hall.

On the first Sunday of each month there will be Holy Communion and a shared meal.

separation.” In the absence of everlasting life, we can be terrified of our future, constantly trying to secure permanence in the face of change (both in the church and in our home life), meaning in the face of waste, distraction in the face of despair. Everlasting life does not undermine nor diminish human effort, but it does rid it of the last word. Death is real, but it cannot overcome everlasting life. Evil is real but it will not have the last word; it is subject to the goodness in God. Darkness is real but it cannot overcome the light of Christ. Hate is real but it cannot overcome God’s love. “Our identity is fragile but that in us which resides in God will be changed into glory.”

If we imagine for a moment the gift of everlasting life, we might feel it slowly dismantle all our worst fears and anxieties. We can let it set us free. We can let it give us indescribable joy. Sam Wells say everlasting life is the other half of Christianity. He says at the heart of it all is forgiveness and everlasting life. If we have those, nothing can hurt us.

Now, says Sam Wells, for the first time, we can live in the present tense – we can experience the present without tense. Then, says Wells, “the past, what we trust God has done, we call faith. The future, what we believe God will do, we call hope. The present, what God embodies and makes possible, we call love.

The above is drawn from and inspired by a talk in the book by Sam Wells and Sally Hitchener, *Being With*. The talk is part of a course. The format for each week is: Welcome, Wonderings, Talk and Reflection. It is a course exploring Christian faith and life. The course began in 2020 at St Martin in the Fields, London. Sam Wells is the vicar and Sally Hitchiner associate vicar for ministry of that church. The material covers ten 90-minute sessions in person or online, but could be adapted to suite less time and fewer sessions.

There are two principles about the course; the first is Jesus and the second is the Holy Spirit. “The convictions that underline the course is that there is a continuity between the face of Christ we have seen on the cross on Good Friday and the face of Christ we shall see on the throne on the Last Day.” This means God is consistent; the way God is consistent with us in Christ is the way God will be with us for ever. The second is that the Holy Spirit has been with and at work in the lives of people all their lives – hence the title “being with.”

The Faith and Worship team are thinking through ways to assist people explore faith, from people who know little about Christianity to those who have known Jesus walking with them for some time. This picks up on the results of the survey we conducted among Bathurst UC early last year. We are still thinking through what material we might use, and the duration of a course. Our thinking is to initiate some courses that meet the different needs of people later in 2024. People might like to chat with members of the faith and Worship Team about what might work for you.

Blessings

Keith Hamilton

There will be a **GIRLS’ NIGHT OUT –**

**Wednesday 29 May, 6.00pm at Vanilla Bean, 109 Bentinck Street.**

Please contact Kaye (0417 850 263) or Maureen (0401 294 269) by Sunday 26 May if you wish to attend.

In fairness to the restaurant, bookings are essential.

All women are invited. It is always a great time of food, fun and fellowship!

## Prayer Ministry Meeting Bring and/or Share Lunch

5th May 2024  
12.00pm – 1.00pm



On May 5<sup>th</sup> (today) in the Activities Hall, we will be having another Prayer Ministry Meeting

We are holding this meeting as we have discussed that there are a few activities we wish to implement, but we want to gain the congregation members' thoughts on how these activities can be achieved.

It will only be a short meeting, and more focused on fellowship.

If you would like the information that was provided to the previous meetings, or the notes taken from these meetings, please contact me on 0423 744 757 or [buctreasury@gmail.com](mailto:buctreasury@gmail.com)

My contact details are also available in the Church Directory.

### **BUSS UPDATE**

The most recent BUSS newsletter is being sent with this newsletter to your email where you can catch up with all that has been happening. There is an information session on this Sunday - as below.

### ***'Cannabis Today'***

*'Cannabis Today'* is our next free information session, on Sunday 5th May, 2.30-4pm in the Activities Hall of the Bathurst Uniting Church.

'Cannabis Today' focuses on:

What is Cannabis? How is it used? What is Medicinal Cannabis? Why do people become addicted?

The session is delivered by Christina Tibaldi Roberts, Provisional Psychologist at the Cannabis Clinic.

**Anyone who is interested is welcome**



**We would like to invite all members of the Congregation and families to come along to a Big Morning Tea for Cancer on Sunday the 12th of May after morning Service in the activities hall and donate for cancer research.**

Everyone in our congregation has had or known someone with cancer. In my family I have lost 2 Uncles, 3 brothers-in laws, 2 cousins, my father and a brother to cancer. My husband Henry has lost a Kidney.

Donations can be made to the Reliance Bank

**BSB:882000**

**Account NO: 100140356 ,Account name: Bathurst Uniting Church.**

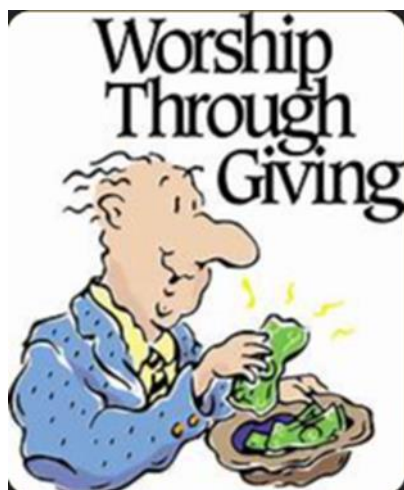
I can be contacted at Email : [rocelynread@bigpond.com](mailto:rocelynread@bigpond.com) or Phone 0417315985.

Thanking you in advance Rocelyn



Thank you to everyone who joined with us to celebrate our recent marriage and gave us many cards, gifts and good wishes . It was a wonderful day for us and you all made it very special. A special thank you to everyone who helped set up the 1837 hall for lunch and brought food and generally organised everything. It was all beautifully done and we are very thankful for such a special gift.

Andrew and Ruth Alder.



## Many Ways to Give:

*To pay invoices issued, to donate to the work of the Church, donations to the Organ Fund, etc:*

**For electronic remittances only @ UFS:**

**BSB:** 634634                      **Account No:** 100019125

**Account Name:** Bathurst City - Working Account

**Narration:** Please indicate why the funds are for.

**For cash or cheque deposits @ Reliance Bank**

**BSB:** 882000                      **Account No:** 300003447

**Account Name:** Bathurst Uniting Church

**Narration:** Please indicate what the funds are for by asking the teller to enter

it into the Bank system.

**For Giving Direct and Offertories:**

**Please see Deb if you wish to set up a regular Direct Debit or Periodical Payment.**

**BSB:** 634634                      **Account No:** 100027964

**Account Name:** Bathurst City - Giving Direct

**Narration:** None is required as these deposits are completely anonymous

**Bathurst Uniting Support Services (BUSS)**

**For the work of BUSS as a General Donation or for a Specific Program being run by BUSS**

**BSB:** 634634                      **Account No:** 100049962

**Account Name:** Bathurst City – BUSS

**Narration:** Please indicate what the funds are for, or if you wish to make an anonymous donation a narration is not required.

Mowing Roster	
4 May Aisea	18 May David
June Brian	

**PLEASE NOTE**

The newsletter email address is [bathurstucanews@gmail.com](mailto:bathurstucanews@gmail.com) . Please send items by 9pm on the last Wednesday of the month

Please send news or information for the website to [allanwray@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwray@hotmail.com)

**Staying Connected**

For pastoral support, please contact your Pastoral Partner, or one of the Elders, or email [BUConnect@gmail.com](mailto:BUConnect@gmail.com) and we'll put you in touch with someone.

You can also contact our minister, Rev Keith Hamilton on 0417487446 or email [keith.hamilton.bathurstuc@gmail.com](mailto:keith.hamilton.bathurstuc@gmail.com)