

**UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
YASS PARISH**



NOVEMBER 2020

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As part of God's people we are called by God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to share the love and grace of Jesus Christ, within our community through regular worship, faithful witness and humble service.

Closure of Ministry Service:

Today, 25th October, a Closure of Ministry Service was conducted for Rev David Stuart. As most of you know, David has been our minister for almost 6 years. The service was not quite what David envisaged it would be. COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings meant that the number permitted to attend was severely limited and, at David's request, those that were invited to attend were Canberra-SNSW Presbytery representatives Ross Kingham and Judy McKinlay (Co-Chairs of Presbytery) and our congregation Elders and members of Church Council. Gillian sang two songs for us accompanied by Judith and Barry then another song and the final blessing accompanied by David. David had invited Rev Aimee Kent to be his guest preacher. The final part of Aimee's message was addressed to David as she assured him that God would stay with Yass and Rye Park and that He would continue to Care for them. She then encouraged David with the words that God would go with him on his forward journey, that God has prepared David for the new call he is answering. Ross and Judy led us through the formalities required in a Closure of Ministry, with Ross reminding David and the Parish, that God goes with us wherever we go, then David was released from ministry in Yass and Rye Park. In his response, David drew on a message he had preached some time back – that each new beginning comes from the end of a new beginning.

David and Gillian were presented with framed paintings by Geoff Townsend of St Andrew's Yass and Rye Park Uniting Churches and money gifted to them to use as they wish.

If you missed the direct stream this morning, you can watch the service on our Facebook page.

(The Editor)

From the Church Council:

Church Council met twice in October to enable us to consider all the reports and business. Meetings are planned to finish by 9 pm because it is not always possible to make good decisions after this time.

On 11th October we met on Zoom and were joined by Rev Dr John Squires from Presbytery and Rev Daniel Mossfield from Crookwell. They will guide us through the steps need to be taken before we can consider calling a new minister. This will take some time.

We were delighted to receive confirmation that Lee Parker has completed her studies and is now able to be accredited as a Lay Preacher. This will be at a special service as soon as it can be arranged by Presbytery.

Finance Committee and Elders recommended that we should look for a suitable person to fill the role of Supply Minister from 1st January to 30th April, 2021. Church Council will have conversations with ministers who might be interested in filling this role in our Parish.

The Financial Report was approved.

It was decided that we would re-open the church buildings. Whilst many welcome this decision we realize that it will be difficult for some people to join us for services in the building. The service will continue to be livestreamed on the Facebook site for those who wish to use this resource.

To be able to use the buildings we are governed by NSW Government rules and Uniting Church Synod rules. This will cause changes in the way we use our buildings. The size of our building limits the number of people we seat during a service.

THOSE WISHING TO JOIN US FOR WORSHIP WILL HAVE TO BOOK IN TO RESERVE A SEAT. PLEASE RING RUTH THOMPSON ON 6226 5463. The answering machine will be on if I am not at home so please leave a message and I will ring back.

On 15th October Church Council MET IN THE HALL. The report from the Property Committee was approved and a report from David Stuart about the Worship-Livestream Group was received and approved. David and a small group have assembled a large amount of equipment to enable the services to be livestreamed. This will continue and volunteers are invited to talk to Sue Demoor.

Changes have been made to our Mission Plan to bring it up to date and it will be presented to the congregations in early 2021 for final approval.

It was decided to hold the services on 18th and 25th October at 9:30 am. The Closure of Ministry service for David on 25th October is invitation only due to the constraints on numbers.

We are going to keep church services going in November and December with our worship teams and Lay Preachers. We hope you will pray for them. We are hopeful that we will be able to employ a supply minister from 1 January to 30 April. Again your prayers will be appreciated.

Starting in November the services at Yass and on the livestream will be at 10 am.

PLEASE NOTE THIS NEW TIME. Rye Park will conduct house church at 5:30 pm.

You don't need to logon on the Facebook to view the video or even be a part of the live services but if you do, you can add comments which are helping to keep us all more connected (finding out about birthdays, anniversaries etc).

A final reminder to ring RUTH THOMPSON ON 6226 5463 TO BOOK A SEAT FOR THE WORSHIP SERVICE AT 10 AM EACH SUNDAY. *(Ruth Thompson, Secretary)*

Finances:

If you wish to do so, you can deposit your offering directly into the Church bank account. Details are:

UCA – Yass Parish Account BSB number: 634 634 Account number: 100039947
with the reference Offering Yass or Offering Rye Park (Lesley Cox, Parish Treasurer)

We remain in contact through:

- Facebook - to find us on Facebook just type in yassunitingchurch
- Website - <https://yass.uca.org.au/> for information and to reach us through contacts
- Pastoral Partners – Contact Barry, Della or Sandra for more information
- Our newsletter continues to play an important role and is now on the website – contact Lee for more information or to contribute
- Prayer Group – currently meeting by Zoom on Thursdays at 9:30 – contact Suzie Graham for more information

You can find contact information for these people on our website using the dropdown list on <https://yass.uca.org.au/contact-us/>

REFLECTION: **The Stamp of Approval. (Written for Sunday 18 October)**

I was reflecting on our gospel reading and Jesus’s use of the coin to draw the attention of his detractors to their obvious shortcomings in understanding/accepting his message.

Coinage has been with us for centuries. The Romans, as our reading tells us, used coinage and such coinage needed a stamp of authority to legitimize its value and usage. Coinage was and still is important. It replaced bartering as the means of doing business. Our early settlers had coinage problems so in 1813 the New South Wales **holey dollar** — the first currency minted in **Australia** was created to address a shortage of coins in the new colony. The coins were counter-stamped and the outer ring became known as “**the holey dollar**”, with the centre renamed “**the dump**”. It is a very valuable coin these days. Coins needed the stamp of authority and as we know all our current coinage has a stamp of authority. The image on the topside of the coin remains the same, but the reverse side can differ and is used to commemorate people, events etc. Coin collectors love these variations.

All of this led me to reflecting on how we, as Christians, approach each day. As we plan a course of action, do we think of getting or seeking God’s stamp of approval? Do we take time to evaluate if the course of action that we plan to take would have God’s stamp of approval?

Too many people in our world today seem to act as though the only approval they need is their own. Their actions are self-centred, the motives self-seeking.

The daily challenge of living as a Christian is a hard challenge in today's world. It is easy to let ourselves be overcome with doubt, mistrust, letting negativity take over and divert us from the course of action that we know we should be taking.

A simple two-minute test can help us in these situations. That test is to ask ourselves "would I have God's approval to do what I plan to do?"

If we are honest with ourselves and believe that the answer is; NO! God wouldn't approve, then we need to step back, re-assess and replan our course of action.

That course of action is how and where we live out our "spiritual life"— our personal devotion to God, our believing the right things, our trying to live by "religious values, our living a faith that is active, our living with God's stamp of approval. (GMP)

Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

RYE PARK CONGREGATION November 2020



Not just a Church, but a Family.

Welcome back,

It has been a while since we have had much to report, so it is exciting to be able to announce a forward movement for our congregation.

At a meeting held on Wednesday, October 14 it was decided not to reopen the Rye Park Church at this time. However, face-to-face services will begin again from November 1st at 5.30pm taking the form of House Church. The first of these will be held at 'Wattle Grove'.

Lay preachers or teams will be most welcome to lead these services but if not convenient for any reason we will conduct our own using other available resources.

These meetings will take place under COVID safe rules, temperature checks, hand sanitizer, distancing etc.

Those of us able to access the live stream services have appreciated David & Gillian's time & effort during this difficult time. The Rye Park congregation would like to take this opportunity to wish David & his family all the very best in their new Parish.

We also take this opportunity to wish Ngaire all the best as we say farewell. Ngaire has been a regular visitor to our congregation over many years & we have appreciated her spiritual wisdom along with her musical & floral talents. Having sold their local property in anticipation of returning to New Zealand she will be missed.

November Birthdays:

Ngaire Albert ... 1st
 Brian Giles-Browne ... 26th

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.
 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow.

Ecclesiastes 4 :9 -10

Friendship is a priceless gift that cannot be bought or sold,
 But its value is far greater than a mountain made of gold.

Helen Steiner Rice



NOVEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS:

DATE	DAY	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL
1	Pent 22	Jos 3: 7-17	Ps 107: 1-7, 33-37	1 Thes 2: 9-13	Mt 23: 1-12
8	Pent 23	Jos 24: 1-3a, 14-25	Ps 78: 1-7	1 Thes 4: 13-18	Mt 25: 1-13
15	Pent 24	Jgs 4: 1-7	Ps 123	1 Thes 5: 1-11	Mt 25: 14-30
22	Christ the King	Ez 34: 11-16, 20-24	Ps 100	Eph 1: 15-23	Mt 25: 31-36
29	Advent 1	Is 64: 1-9	Ps 80: 1-7, 17-19	1 Cor 1: 3-9	Mk 13:24-37

NOVEMBER WORSHIP LEADERS:

Sunday 1 st	Sunday 8 th	Sunday 15 th	Sunday 22 nd	Sunday 29 th
Barry Banks	Owen & Suzie Graham	Barry Banks	Ruth Thompson (Commissioning of Lee Parker as an Accredited Lay Preacher)	Rye Park TBC

The current generation has a reputation for being super-clever BUT.....Moses had the first tablet that could connect to the cloud.

Reflection: Still Learning

A Sunday School teacher was trying to help her class learn familiar passages from the Bible. One of these was Psalm 23. Some of the children took a long time to learn the Psalm, while a few picked it up without any problem. But for one lad, it was just too much. He tried and tried, but he just couldn't get it at all. He could barely get past the first line. The teacher reassured him that this would be fine for him and that he wasn't to worry. And she reckoned that a single not-so-good-one in her class could be lived with.

A minister was visiting the class and the teacher boasted how good the children were with scripture.

'So, let's hear one,' he suggested. 'You there' And he pointed to the little lad in the front row. 'what scripture have you been learning?'

The teacher was mortified. The others in the class collectively held their breath.

'Psalm 23,' chirped the little lad.

'OK, then,' said the minister. 'Stand up and let's hear how much you know.'

The little lad in the front row stood up, and in his best public-speaking voice said loudly, 'The Lord is my shepherd....and that's all I need to know!'

'Thank you,' said the minister. 'I think your teacher has been helping you to get to know scripture very well indeed.'

We don't always get all the details right.

But grasping the essence is a good place to start.

(Tom Gordon: The Very Life of Life, Wild Goose Publications 2018)

The Stuart family:

We have loved having David as our minister and leader over the last almost 6 years. David's leadership in new governance organisation, mission planning and online Facebook services have been a great gift to us. We will miss him greatly, but we will also miss his wonderful family.

We were there at the beginning of Hannah's life and have watched her sharing in services with her vibrant personality. We watched Harry grow from a little toddler to a very competent 9 year old with great LEGO skills that he used to illustrate a Bible story. The quiet Phoebe who arrived in Yass is leaving us as a competent Bible reader who has confidently shared her beautiful new puppy, Milo, with us in Facebook services from their home. Gillian arrived sharing her beautiful voice with us, then with Community Carols and now the world through Facebook. We will also really miss making gingerbread houses with Gillian at Christmas. Thank you all for taking such a big part in our church family.

I asked them what they enjoyed reading recently.

Hannah: Barbie and the Three Musketeers
Harry: the Amulet series
Phoebe: Wonder and the Babysitters Club
Gillian: Searching for Sunday
David: Surprise the World

I then decided to ask them what they will miss most about Yass.

Hannah: her friends, her teacher, Mrs Fay, her playhouse.

Harry: his friends and Riverbank Park

Phoebe: friends and the heater

Gillian: friends and colleagues, going downtown and chatting with people, the colours of the country and sky

David: friends, loving/caring people at church, small town atmosphere, drive to Rye Park and Canberra, countryside, a caring environment

What about church? What did you like the most or what will you miss?

Hannah: playgroup, Helen, kids church, David, the minister (I said she could take him with her ;-))

Harry: Kids church

Phoebe: wonderful morning teas, Frontier services

Gillian: activities like Harvest festivals at Rye Park and Frontier services, the people

David: Everyone's willingness to help and do things for the church and for the services.

Favourite memory: Della on the jumping castle at a Frontier Service!

What are they looking forward to in their new home?

Hannah: new school

Harry: beach, movie theatre

Phoebe: being closer to grandparents and cousins, more kids at church

Gillian and David: new challenges

We will miss you all, beautiful family, and we thank you and wish you well in your new adventure. (*Sue Demoor*)

Laughter – The best of medicines.

You know it is going to be a bad day when the letters in your alphabet soup spell D-I-S-A-S-T-E-R.

Did you hear about the crook who stole a calendar? He got twelve months.

Did you hear about the semi-colon that broke the law? He was given two consecutive sentences.

So what if I don't know what "Armageddon" means? It's not the end of the world.

If I got 50 cents for every maths exam I failed, I'd have \$ 6.30 now.

Reflection: Sticking Together

I was looking for inspiration for this week’s Reflections when I came across this particular message and thought it has relevance to this Sunday’s theme of loving our neighbour. Our world is a troubled world, our society is a troubled society. Values that have stood for generations are being challenged, discarded, abused. It is a challenge to stand up for Jesus. It is a time for sticking together as a country, as a church and as a congregation. **It should be our highest priority.**

Steve Goodier writes: An old story is told of two men who went fishing in a small boat. The day was uneventful until one of them hooked a huge fish, which, in the struggle, pulled him overboard. He couldn't swim and began to panic. "Help!" he yelled. "Save me!"

The friend reached over and grabbed the man by the hair to pull him closer to the boat. But when he tugged, the man's toupee came off and he slipped down under the water again. He came up shouting, "Help me! I can't swim!" So the friend reached down again and this time latched onto the struggling man's arm. But when he pulled, the arm came off! It was an artificial limb. The drowning man continued to kick and thrash around and his friend reached out a third time. This time he grabbed a leg and pulled. You guessed it -- a wooden leg.

The man continued splashing and sputtering and calling out, "Help me!" until his friend finally called back in disgust, "How can I help you if you won't stick together?"

And that is a metaphor for each of us. How can people in marriages and families stand a chance when they won't stick together? How can religious communities, civic groups, schools and businesses get anywhere when they won't stick together? And how can a nation or even our global village function well when it won't stick together?

None of us lives in isolation. This experience we call life is a group outing. We're in it together. And some conflict along the way is inevitable. But our highest priority, when all is said and done, has to be our commitment to each other – sticking together.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said:

“We are made for goodness. We are made for love.
We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness.
We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, uneducated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all.
We all belong to this family, this human family, God's family.”

Steve Goodier finishes with the statement “I can't say it any more clearly.” And I agree. God is the glue that is there for us to use to help us to stick together. (SG/GMP)

December Newsletter:

Please have all items for the December edition to the Editor by Tuesday, 24 November.
