



Anglican Diocese
of Bendigo

The Spirit monthly

May/June 2020

Issue 152

Ministry continues in innovative ways

This month we feature how churches around the diocese are continuing to minister despite not being able to physically meet together because of the COVID-19 restrictions.



Woodend-Trentham

Live streaming and Godly Play

The Holy Week services in Woodend-Trentham were offered via live stream this year and included daily bible reflections, stations of the cross, and Maundy Thursday vigil and psalm reading.

On Holy Saturday the children of Woodend-Trentham were invited to listen to the story of the resurrection of Jesus and participate in a paper craft activity at home.

Using the Godly Play method, which is very adaptable to live streaming, Rev Mel told the story of Jesus' death and resurrection paying special attention to the setting in the garden. The children were then encouraged to use the emailed colouring sheet and add their own art to the garden.

Niamh and Rupert enjoyed the activity and sent a photo of what they had done.

Melissa Clark

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The Bishop writes

...and tweets  @MattBrain

Dear Friends,

My rugby career (don't ask why a West Australian boy was playing rugby) came to a shuddering halt when my leg got broken on the field. After eventually finding my way back home I called my Dad to tell him the news and his first words were, "You weren't praying for patience were you?"

If this time of pandemic has taught us nothing, it's taught us of the need for patience. Patience can be difficult to put up with, excruciating to learn, and frustrating to maintain. Yet patience is the key to unlock a wise route out of what can seem like a clouded land. Patience has all sorts of aspects, and we see different aspects of patience expressed through different parts of Scripture.

One of my favourite books is John's Revelation, that very last book of the Bible with all of the vivid imagery. It talks to a hard pressed people who cannot control the circumstances of the world that they live in and how to be God's people. Many of the images speak to one eternal truth - that God's people, who are often tossed and turned in a world that they cannot control, need perseverance.

Perseverance is the first part of patience. Perseverance itself has two characters; the first is hearing and trusting God's promises for his people even when the present circumstances seem out of his control. But then the second character looks forward to a time when those promises will be fulfilled. The concluding chapters of Revelation show us the vision of God's fulfilled work where people, enriched by their faithful dependence upon God, gather together to sing praises to the one who has vindicated them - who has shown their faith to be not held in vain. So, as we are patient we must persevere, trusting in God's promises and looking forward to that time of fulfilment.

A second aspect is to be practising the Christian life whatever the circumstances; even if valued activities are not possible. Just as we are not able to

engage in some of the practices that we think are valuable and which we hold so dear, we can look back to characters like Daniel. You will remember Daniel, who was a godly man, who acted rightly and faithfully. He couldn't go to the temple, the synagogues hadn't been invented, and yet, he was prevented from the usual acts of worship that an Israelite would have done. Yet he prayed, he was able to meet and discuss the godly life with his friends, he was able to think through the Scriptures as he had them. Daniel stands out as one who consistently made wise and godly choices. He was the one who worked out what it meant to be what we would call a Christian in a life where he could not do things that he valued deeply.

The third aspect of patience is prioritising clearly what we do. When I think of prioritising what we do, and its role in patience I think of Paul, the apostle who wrote so much of the New Testament. Now Paul was a very clever man. He could have worked well within the Jewish world as what we would now know as a lawyer. Equally he knew the Roman world and I imagine he would have been a very good operator in it. He was good with his hands, he was a businessman, he could maintain what we now know as a leather workshop. He was also very energetic and durable. He was someone who had a lot of capacity and could have done many great things. Yet he was rigorous in what he prioritised, what he chose to do. His desire was to see people be enfolded in Christ. He wanted people to be in Christ whether they were people who were Christian or whether they were not yet Christian. He prioritised his time on helping them become people in Christ. This meant that he was able to be patient in his endeavours with individuals, his endeavours with churches and his distribution of time. He did not do all sorts of things which he would have been capable of doing. But he was clear and focused on what he would be able to do, and he stuck with it. So,

patience is persevering when we cannot change a situation, patience is practising a Christian life even when some of our valued activities are not possible, patience is prioritising what we do, and patience is perceiving God's call for the future.

There are times when we do need to just pause and wait and see what it is that God would have for the next lap of our life together. Friends, we are in one of those times. But the great thing about patience; when we persevere, when we practise and when we prioritise is that the vision of what is next will become apparent. We get to see what is in God's heart, we get to see the needs around about us and we get to see the people that God is changing us to be, and it is then that the next step will become clear. We will be able to see the next step that we must take on this journey together to be God's faithful people, the next step that we must take so that we might work with God so that we might transform not just ourselves but our society through the love of Jesus. How it might be that we might see worshiping congregations in every community.

So friends, patience is not marking time, it is not the second best option that we fall back to when we can't do anything else, it is actually formative as we pay attention to a circumstance that we can't change, and discover what God would have for us next when the times change.

that



All Saints Tatura

Artwork and bells

Like most Christians across Australia, it was a very different Easter for the parishioners and community of Tatura due to COVID-19 restrictions. Even our church neighbours commented that it was a strange Easter not hearing church bells and not seeing people coming to church. We committed there and then to start ringing the bells again each Sunday at 10am.

Whilst we could not meet at the church, we placed artwork by one of our parishioners, Kate Peachey on display outside the church building along with 3 crosses. The portraits captured Jesus' journey to the cross and his resurrection. The first portrait

was about Jesus being betrayed by Judas with a kiss and his arrest in the garden of Gethsemane. The second portrait was of Jesus' trial at night and highlighted Peter's denial of Jesus with the rooster. The third portrait showed Jesus on the cross and telling the story of his suffering and pain for our sins. We put out the final portrait of the risen Jesus on Easter Day, the glorious day when Christ conquered death and sin.

It was a windy weekend, which was a challenge for the easels to stay up. Tatura residents were so kind to pick them up even if there was no one around. We chose to put up this display to help our community reflect on the true meaning of Easter: the sacrifice that Jesus made dying on the cross to reconcile people back to God.

Next to the portraits, we placed a sign with a simple message written on it, "Jesus loves you, He died for your sins.

Have a blessed Easter." We placed the Bible Society's Children's Easter Story Books alongside the portraits for passers-by to take a few copies. Many people doing their regular daily exercise in Tatura walked past the church and saw the paintings and crosses. Word got around such that a few cars drove past slowly showing interest in what they were seeing. We received good feedback about the display, people appreciated the church's effort in getting the message out.

Yes, the church building may be closed but as the bells ring each Sunday morning in faith, it is our way of telling the community that the church is still here in Tatura, praying for our town, our region and all people across Australia and the world.

Simba Musvamhiri



St Paul's Birchip

Embracing worship at home

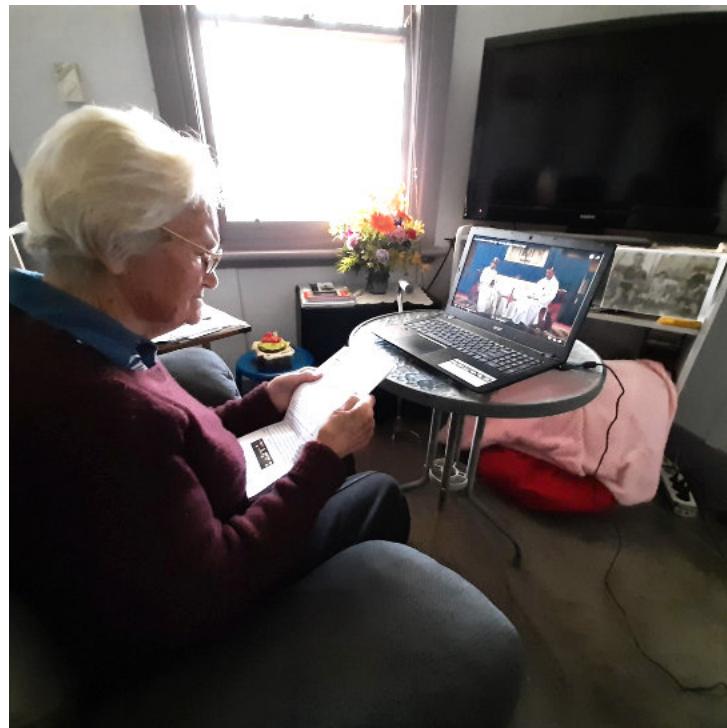
May I introduce you all to Dorrie Russell, a parishioner of St Paul's Birchip, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday. (I have her permission to share this joyous news with you all).

It is a wonderful photograph of Dorrie, I know you will agree, but look again and see what I see. An example of enduring faith embracing worship and praise. This worship may not be "in" church but Dorrie is certainly "at" church. She is in the front pew hearing God's word and the message of Easter in an online service provided by the Diocese. A different way but the same message. Celebrating the risen Christ and hearing the story that did not end with a closed tomb and a dead body but with an empty tomb and a resurrection.

For all of us, an example of enduring love continuing to welcome and embrace Jesus in her life.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

Judi Bird



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Maryborough with Avoca



The people of God are still active

After our Lenten journey we began Holy Week following Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem with a video service for the Passion of Christ (Palm Sunday) from St Paul's Anglican Church in Moonambel. Most parishioners had a pack for this week delivered to their homes. The pack included a palm cross, the Diocesan resource pack titled the Spirit Easter at Home 2020, a Solemn Prayer Service for Good Friday (adapted for use at home) reading sheets for the services and a Sunday morning daily prayer service sheet.

Some of our parishioners celebrated their own Easter Vigil Service on the Eve of Easter. I as Rector had the same

service at Christ the King Church in Maryborough giving thanks for the gift of the small new fire, lighting and blessing of the Paschal Candle and singing the Light of Christ into the church, placing it on the stand and, to glorify God, saying the Easter Proclamation, concluding with the gospel of Matthew 28:1-10.

Our Easter service was videoed at Christ the King Anglican Church in Maryborough. The doors were opened momentarily as a symbol that we are not closed. The people of God are still active in this Parish, following Jesus bringing his message of forgiveness, love and everlasting life to those who come to know and follow him.

Heather Blackman



Bendigo North

Putting the puzzle together

Over Easter this year we had a new family join our parish. What a blessing! What I love most about this story is how it shows that the risen Christ is alive and well, walking in our midst, directing our paths and putting the puzzle pieces together even amidst a pandemic. The story begins with half a pack of size 5 girls nappies that were given to me by a mum who had found them in the back of a cupboard. This prompted me to prioritise visiting a parishioner to deliver the nappies, toilet paper, a Worship at Home pack and Easter eggs. Aluel told me the nappies were too small for her daughter but might fit her cousin's

daughter. She then shared more about her cousin's situation and asked if I could reach out to them. Zacchaeus and his wife Akuol and daughter Abuk had just moved to Bendigo a few weeks prior. Would you believe it, they live five minutes from my house!

Akuol and I connected easily as her daughter is only a year younger than mine, and she is 7 months pregnant with a boy and I also have a 1 year old boy. After Easter, Wendy and I delivered a bundle of baby furniture, clothes, bedding and toys from Sunshine Bendigo and we have made plans to share a Sudanese/Australian dinner soon. Akuol is delighted to have their story and picture shared as a testimony of God's love.

Suzannah Daniels



St Paul's Cathedral

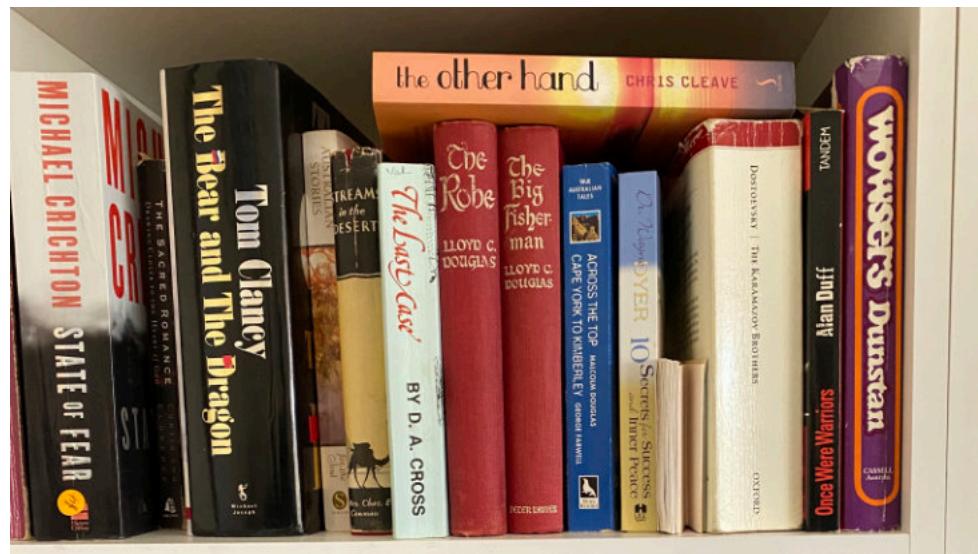
Lockdown library initiative

Among other initiatives undertaken in the Cathedral parish is the Lockdown Library. The purpose is to bring reading material to people who are at home a lot, without access to the town library or to the usual fount of all cheap books - the Op shops.

Books are collected from donors, cleaned and stored in a clean, dry covid-free corner and added to a list. The latter is circulated to any serial (and even one-off) readers known to the parish. When someone wishes to read a book, they contact us with their request and the books are delivered to their doorstep. Most of the deliveries are made by bicycle, so the whole enterprise is clean and green, employing that great alternative fuel called chocolate and on more savoury occasions, Red Rock Chilli Chips.

The range of books in our library is quite stunning, with titles to interest everyone, from Welsh Corgi breeders (seriously) to those keen on mystery and adventure, the classics and some inspiring stories of faith. A bunch of children's books and puzzles have been sent to some of the kids from our parish and it is rumoured that one book in the library is destined to travel to Balmoral (not by bike).

Angela Lorrigan



Harvey Town Cluster

An innovative Easter

This year Easter was unlike any the Harvey Town Cluster has experienced before and I must admit that I felt quite uncertain as we approached Holy Week. How can we faithfully identify with the path of Jesus through his suffering and death to his resurrection life, when we can't physically be present with one another?

This is where I thank God for technology. Very early into the crisis we adopted Zoom as the technology of choice because we could see the capacity for it to encourage participation in worship. Indeed, it has been a great success with regular morning and evening prayer gatherings as well as small groups, bible studies and kids groups, not to mention larger gatherings each Sunday.

I was really encouraged on Good Friday as the number of devices hooking up to commemorate Christ's crucifixion kept on increasing to the point where we had fifty-seven participants. Knowing that each participating device was at least one person, a couple or a family, meant that we had almost every member of the Harvey Town Cluster either present by telephone, computer or iPad. I was overjoyed.

The learning I will take away this Easter is that even forced isolation will not stop God's people from keeping the main thing, the main thing! Jesus is the

centre of our lives together and at the holiest time of the year his Spirit enabled all of us to overcome the challenges, be innovative, and importantly to remain unified. Praise the Lord!

Brendan McDonald

Zoom kept us in touch

Members of the Harvey Town Cluster of Eaglehawk and Maiden Gully have kept in touch each day with Morning and Evening Prayer using Zoom.

This new way of congregating has been appreciated by our rector Brendan McDonald and participants for a handful of reasons.

1. Laughter has been a feature as members arrive and leave the meetings.
2. Lectionary readings have given us a great variety of Bible passages.
3. Liturgy from A Prayer Book for Australia has a richness of expression.
4. Love is shown by members offering pastoral care to one another.
5. Lucky describes how we feel about so many facilities being available.

People passing by St Peter's church hall have been considered, by enabling them to catch a glimpse of the Easter message shown by representations of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. (See photos).

We all look forward to Christmas when we hope to be able to sing carols like The First Noel together in person!

Barry Rainsford



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Gannawarra Cluster

Staying connected through Facebook and letter drops

Hi dee ho, from all of us up here in the Gannawarra Cluster. Wow, who would have thought we would be making history in our own lifetime? Go figure, but we are! These unprecedented events caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, trigger in me thoughts around parallels with other history

making times, such as the world wars and serious death taking viruses, like the Spanish Flu. How these events made and shaped history and now in our lifetime we are living through and experiencing another history making and shaping time. And how life as we knew it may never quite be experienced the same again.

To help us to come to terms with this change, in the Gannawarra Cluster over the Passion week, we tried to keep connection with our fellow brothers and sisters and our community. I braved coming to terms with

Facebook, which I have avoided using before, and posted a reflection video on Maundy Thursday and Easter. With the help of my trusty volunteers (nicely socially distanced and number limited) we produced a letter drop for each of our regular attenders, which included a Reflection for Good Friday and Easter, a quiz and of course Easter eggs. We also beautified our gates with pictures of Jesus' death and rising (see photos attached).

Shalom.

Sue Allen



Bendigo Health

Jesus found at Lake Weroona

On a Monday morning early in March 2020 an email informed me that, as a Chaplain, I could no longer attend Bendigo Health Hospital campus or the five aged care facilities within its auspices. No prior notice or warning had been given. I was not prepared for the lock down instigated by Bendigo Health and its subsequent impact upon me and my communities within Bendigo Health. I felt marginalised, stripped, without a defence, from my ministry. Soon after churches were closed and worship as we knew it had to be re-thought; new ways of doing Church; new ways of ministry as a Chaplain.

Easter loomed and thoughts turned to how the Easter story could be celebrated in a weird and frightening new world, cut off from our familiar

places of worship and our communities in those places.

This Easter I experienced God the Father, and God the Son, the risen Lord Jesus in all their glory, as each morning, with my wife Glenda, I walked around Lake Weroona here in Bendigo. Jesus spoke to me through the varied birdlife that took advantage of the absence of the normal noise of humanity at work and play. The birds quickly adapted to the decreased human presence and with increased confidence and diminishing fear they began to spread far and wide. It seemed the humans became neighbours and not intruders. The birds strutted about in all their colours and quirkiness, both on and out of the water. I saw a pelican in all its grandeur land and gracefully entertain a receptive human audience. The noise and busyness of the birds has become the common sound and what a joy that is!

The first verses of Genesis came to mind with their wonderful images. I have this vision of God creating our world, stroking his beard, (surely God has a beard!!), truly satisfied that all was good.

This Easter my attention has been focussed on the beauty of our world and to take the opportunity to rest quietly in its beauty.

Jesus said,

"My peace I give you. My peace I leave with you. My ways are not the ways of this world. Rest in my peace and do not be anxious or afraid."

Jesus, I believe.

Terry Templer
Anglican Chaplain
Bendigo Health

Kyneton

Despite the restrictions the parish thrives

Whilst churches have needed to be closed our parish continues to live on as we continue to share in the love and life of Jesus our Lord differently.

This includes live-streaming worship via Kyneton Anglicans - You Tube, including Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Day and Sundays since late March, plus Anzac Day. On-line views have been increasing (more than usual attendance). Despite restrictions brought on by COVID-19, sharing our faith in Jesus by these means, has added another dimension to our outreach.

Stations of the Cross were placed in the Memorial Garden where individually people can come to pray. They were made by Michael Bloxsome whilst in quarantine at home, having returned from overseas. Two bears (with bunny ears) have adorned the breezeway, holding a prayer for Easter. Prayers@5.55, individually undertaken at home, finishing with ringing the church bell has been launched.

For Holy Week/Easter parishioners and some baptism families received a package (Rev Mel Clark's idea), including prayers to use, a palm cross, a tea light (as a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world) and a little packet of Easter Eggs. Allison Howarth has continued sharing her skills painting eight painted paschal candles for various churches. All reminders that despite any darkness in our world, Christ is risen. Alleluia!

Ian Howarth



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In Loving Memory...

St Arnaud

Church may be empty but the light shines brightly

I had a lovely walk Good Friday morning delivering the last of The Spirit magazines along with the DVD of Good Friday and Easter Services. I set off about 8am and it was very quiet at least for the first part. It was a good time to pray for the town.

I walked by some pine trees. I read an anecdote recently about how pine trees grow new cross shaped shoots at the end of their top branches just in time for Easter. Well not on the ones I could see, but when I looked down again there was a cross shaped piece of wood, just right for a beautiful holding cross.

And the whole walk felt like a way of the cross, no crowds, though towards the end I did set off most of the towns dogs barking as I walked past. 'Crucify him!' they were barking. 'Crucify him!'

When I got back to the church I pulled the huge cross from our back room and placed it by the front door with a crown of thorns and a purple robe.

Tonight I am turning on the lights in the church. And I will for all of the Easter season I think. We can do so little. The churches are empty but the light of God stills shines; It shines out through the stark crucifixion depicted in the North Windows, and through all the stories of the bible, the annunciation, birth, baptism, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, our good shepherd our light and way. Wishing you many Easter blessings this year of exile 2020.

Jan Harper



Photo left: The Hornsby family from APOSS celebrated Easter by making a very colourful flower cross in their yard reminding us of the new life that Jesus offers

Kangaroo Flat

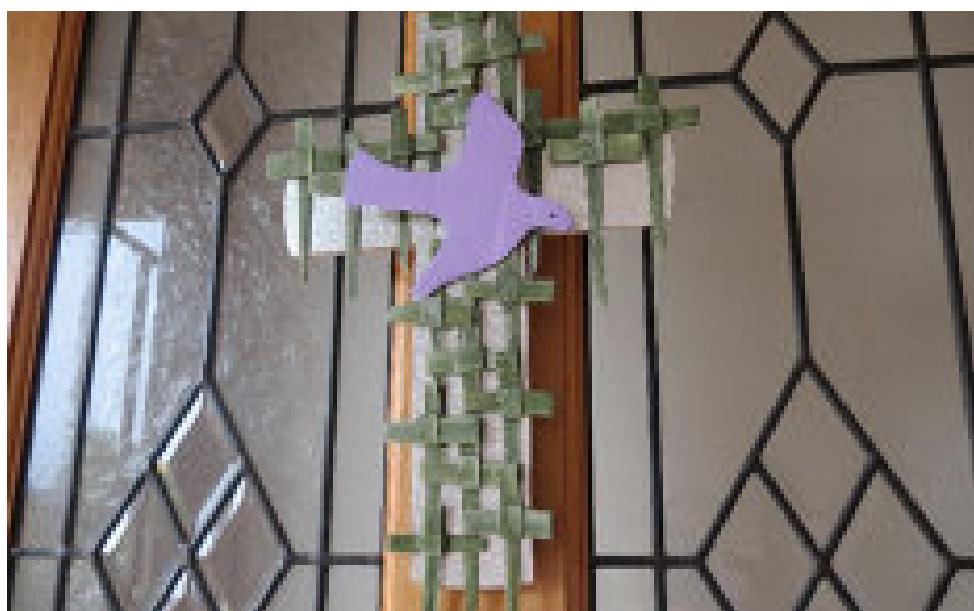
Connecting community through social media

Easter certainly was different in the Parish this year. However, it was celebrated with enthusiasm and joy, beyond the walls of the church in our streets, neighbourhoods, homes and communities. Families decorated letter boxes, doors, gates and lamp posts on Palm Sunday with palm branches to commemorate the day. In keeping with tradition palm crosses were still kindly made and circulated around the Parish.

On Maundy Thursday a worship service using Zoom took place and on Easter day, a decorated cross and a recording of the Paschal candle was uploaded to social media and families awokened to "Christ is risen, Alleluia...He is risen indeed, Alleluia", via Facebook. Whilst they could not physically be at the church that morning, each of their names were printed and placed on the seats in the church.

We are very grateful to 105.1 Life FM for the opportunity we have had to broadcast an hour service each Sunday including Easter Day and Good Friday. This has been so welcomed by people near and far! We have listeners who tune in via their computer and smart phones from overseas and interstate. In conjunction with this, residents in nursing homes and aged care facilities are listening in and this brings us much joy to be able to pray with them and minister to them at such a challenging time. It has also been a great joy to connect and provide ministry for residents in aged care via Whats App. This is now a regular occurrence. Who would have thought we would be doing that!

Tracey Wolsley



Steve Geyer



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June Andrew



Pastoral ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic

In this prevailing lockdown situation the church's ministry continues to undergo a drastic transformation. Sunday services and other special services are being recorded and broadcast via online facilities. In this situation of turbulence, I too, as a minister, faced the temptation of being pastorally paralysed. However with the grace of God and the support of my ministerial colleagues in our Parish, I resisted the temptation and continued our ministry while accepting the change in the mode of our traditional way of doing ministry. We consider the change as an opportunity to reach out from four wall ministry to open world ministries.

In the light of this call for change and transformation in our ministries, the question that has been raised in my mind is what does pastoral care mean and what does it look like in this situation of turmoil and suffering? This question led me to look at the 'I am' sayings as a mirror: What do Jesus' 'I am' sayings mean in this pandemic situation and what does it look like in this situation of lockdown and social distancing?

Jesus said; "I am the Bread of life" (John 6:35). What does Jesus mean by this utterance? Bread is essential to sustain human life. Vibrancy of human life and life in wholeness means celebration of relationship with God and the people of God.

What does it mean to us as a church? We are called to be the bread and agents to supply bread to those who have no food. This sufficiency reflects in all the 'I am' sayings of Jesus. Jesus said: "I'm the real vine - my Father is the gardener and you are the branches" (John 15:1, 5). The way this analogy is used in the Scripture, reflects that the Church cannot exist in exclusion or in segregation. Church and the world belong to each other. Our life becomes purposeful, meaningful and fulfilling through our relationship with God and the people of God. The 'I am' sayings of Jesus reflect an 'I-You' relationship - celebration of co-existence. It means staying connected or living in connectedness.

My pastoral ministry during this strange pandemic situation gave me



the opportunity to develop a ministry of presence, especially in situations of isolation and helplessness where words have little to offer. During this situation, I connect with the church membership and friends in the wider community systematically by communicating with a few families daily through telephone offering them pastoral care and reminding them of the church's pastoral supporting presence and availability and sense of belonging. I conclude my telephone pastoral care with a short Bible based devotion and offer a prayer with them, taking into consideration their prayer requests.

Whenever we come across anyone in need of any help to get them the essential supplies, responsible action is taken to meet those needs. There have been situations when people approach me with their worries and anxiety causing them considerable distress. Their needs can be met through offering them pastoral care and practical support. I believe that the pandemic situation has brought the church an opportunity to become a spiritual hub for the neighbourhood and the wider community.

The present pandemic situation has made me to turn to Bonhoeffer's theology which becomes relevant to the current situation. "Church becomes Church only when it exists for others - Church is Christ existing as community". It means community with God is simultaneously the community of co-community - celebration of co-existence. Church community is humanity being remade and redeemed as a result of God's creative grace for the purpose of 'existing for others'. This is what I see and learn in this contextual pandemic situation - a call for me and the church to live not for ourselves or for our glory but to live for others and glorify the God of the universe by being a person existing for 'the other'.

I also foresee a 'post coronavirus pandemic trauma stress' emerging which I believe in our near future will become a call for the church's pastoral and spiritual care. Therefore the present pandemic opens the way for the church to come out of its four walls and to go into the wider world living out the message of the risen Christ.

Bertram Mather

Adapting to working from home

The last two months have been met with trial and tribulation - I have really enjoyed being at home with my children helping them with their school work and this has meant more flexible work hours to fit everything in. I am a real morning person so starting at 6am most days has been fantastic for me.

On the other hand, I am really missing my work colleagues and the wider community. Being the receptionist at the Registry was full of different conversations and enquiries and I would say this is what I am missing the most. I am also missing having everything I need right at my fingertips

- I have noticed some things take longer at home and if I have a question it can take a while to get the answer rather than being able to quickly ask someone in person.

The one thing that I hope to continue after COVID-19 is spending more time at home with my family. I must say it has been amazing to have the opportunity to really just be at home with nothing else to do. We have had nice dinners by a camp fire, played board games and have gone for some long walks.

I have always known it, but it has been nice to be reminded that the small things in life are the most important and I am capable even though I don't think I am sometimes.

Melissa Ford, Reception and Administration, Registry Office



The Spirit

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June issue: Contributions due by Friday 19 June.

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