



EASTWOOD UNITING CHURCH NEWSLETTER

April 2022



Holy Week Services

Palm/Passion Sunday 10 April:

8am on site breakfast worship

9.30am on site and via Zoom

11am Cantonese on site and via Zoom

Monday 11 April:

8pm via Zoom – Lent reflections

Tuesday 12 April:

8pm via Zoom – Lent reflections

Maundy Thursday 14 April:

6.30pm on site includes Communion followed by a light meal (please register)

Good Friday 15 April:

9, 10 and 11am on site – ‘Journey with Jesus to the cross’ an interactive time of reflection and prayer

Easter Sunday 17 April:

10am Combined Worship gathering with message, prayers and Bible readings offered in choice of languages
Children’s Easter Egg Hunt
– followed by Morning tea together

Wollongong Day Trip 臥龍崗一天遊

Date: 25 / 4 (Monday-ANZAC holiday)

(周一 - 澳紐日公假)

Beaches, great food and iconic attractions. Are you ready? Let’s GO! Participants need to wear comfortable clothing /footwear and be able to walk around the city. We will have lunch break in the shopping centre. Return around 4pm.

悉尼南岸臥龍崗一天遊,海灘,食店和地標建設遍佈全市。歡迎參加! 參加者請穿著舒適的衣物, 並能夠在市中心周圍步行參觀。我們中午會在商場自費午餐。約下午 4 點回程。



Gathering Time & venue : 9am Central Station— Customer Service Centre 集合時間地點: 當天上午九時正在悉尼中央火車站大堂詢問處 Make use of the freebies include all methods of public transport .

Please call Tennyson 0411896274 to register. 今次可利用公共交通的免費優惠, 免費報名參加。請先致電陳牧師 0411896274 報名登記。

If you attend any Church activities,
PLEASE WEAR A NAMETAG.

We have some new people and it makes
it much friendlier if you wear a nametag!

IN MEMORIAM

Kevin Chew

24/7/1935 -26/2/2022

APRIL Birthdays

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Margaret Shannon | 1/4 |
| Elliot Parker-Lacey | 9/4 |
| Brianna Weatherburn | 11/4 |
| Barbara Horrocks | 19/4 |
| Caitlyn Weatherburn | 21/4 |
| Samantha Weatherburn | 21/4 |
| Janelle Dodd | 26/4 |
| Eddy Ganschow | 28/4 |

Leaders/PoD/Ch.Council - Team Strengths

May 14, Noon-5pm with Rev Ben Gilmour

(Ministers from 11am) @ EUC (w lunch)

Please do the Gallup-Clifton Strengths Survey by May 7 in preparation. (a link will be sent).

If you are interested in standing for Church Council, you are also welcome to register for this (office).

BRINGING HOPE AND HUMANITY AMID FLOOD DEVASTATION

Chaplain Lauris Harper is now in her second deployment to the flood-soaked and devastated Northern Rivers area of NSW.

It's a community that is reeling with a second significant flood event in almost as many weeks. The flood waters broke Lismore's levy and evacuation orders were again in place this week.

Mrs Harper, a fully qualified chaplain, was directly impacted with rising waters meaning she had to evacuate hotel accommodation Wednesday morning. She also had to abandon her car as it wouldn't have made it through the floodwaters, highlighting the logistical challenges of responding to this flood crisis.

She is one of the 71 chaplains that have been deployed to flooded communities since late February, 59 from NSW's Disaster Recovery Chaplain Network (DRCN), 11 from the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry and one from the ACT.

"It is impossible to comprehend what these people have suffered, they experienced record flooding in 2017 and told it would never be as bad again, then a worse flood event happened earlier this month and now three weeks later they have been inundated again," Mrs Harper said.

"It's hard to understand the strain, the immensity of what people feel, the mental health issues it creates – it's hard to understand unless you have been through it."

Mrs Harper said not only is there no easy or quick solutions but often accessing the help that is available is difficult, bureaucratic and dehumanising.

"One woman I spoke to who had lost everything in the Lismore floods just told me her story. And after I listened to her, she said it was the first time she had felt human, that she had felt valued and treasured since the disaster struck," she said.

Mrs Harper, who is a member of St Stephen's Uniting Church in Sydney, has deployed as a chaplain to several disasters.

Earlier in March she deployed to Lismore for five days where she worked in the evacuation centre set up in the Southern Cross University campus and which housed up to 150 people.

"There was an equal spread of men and women in the centre, many had little to start with but they had lost everything. Some were shattered, others showed significant resilience. Some were angry



and frustrated and felt let down by the system. But they were happy to have a chat and over that time I was able to develop some strong connection,” she said.

“But to be back in this area again and to see the town under water again is heart breaking. This is a resilient community and there are stories of hope but the road to recovery is long and for many they cannot fathom what they will do next.”

The Coordinator of the Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network, Rev. Dr. Stephen Robinson, said the situation in the Northern Rivers was very changeable with this week’s 300mm of rain that was dumped across the region hampering recovery efforts.

“Today, due to the extreme weather situation and lack of access we could only field four chaplains across three evacuation centres, though there are ten evacuation centres currently open. Every other agency is having the same problem with access,” Rev. Robinson said on Wednesday.

“Some of the DRCN chaplains have done multiple deployments out of area (from Sydney or Newcastle) up to two weeks total, some local chaplains continue to go on shift in centres and support people in their own, and nearby, communities despite living in the situation.”

The Moderator’s Flood Appeal, since the beginning of March, has received \$77,838.04 in donations. To date a total of \$115,150 has been released for recovery efforts, using some reserves that were in the fund.

*article taken from Insights Magazine online 1 April 2022
Lauris and Alan Harper were long-time members of Eastwood Uniting Church*

Mary, wife of Cleopas (i) Woman from Emmaus

What is a respectful distance?

Far enough not to hear
the struggle for breath?

Far enough not to see
the perspiration trickle down the tortured
frame?

Or far enough to avoid
the kicks and beatings of the soldiers.

What is this dehumanizing
that comes with colonizing this empire?
What bile arises as we watch and grieve
for goodness hanging there? -
One day an artwork, to hang upon a wall?
This is not decorative, nor entertaining.

What is achieved?
The desire is terror...
to plant such fear within us
that his broken body

becomes our broken spirit.
How can anyone, even a prophet,
choose this?

What is my role,
but to bear witness to this darkness?
I would not let Cleo come,
for all the followers are in danger.
All of us fear to make the choice
that would draw us on so black a path.
I bade him hide
and I will bear the news to him
when it is done.

What does it mean
to be among such a crowd of women?
Our word means nothing in court of Law,
yet we are the ones to watch
and tell the eternal story of hate, and love,
of suffering and death.

(John 19:25)



From the Minister's Desk

Life is like riding a bicycle... when you fall off, you just need to get back on. When we moved to a city with lots of bike paths, I wanted to learn to ride a bike. Terry took me to a bike shop and I tried riding a bike in the lane behind the shop. I kept falling off. When he saw that I have no sense of balance and couldn't ride a bike, he took me back into the shop and asked for training wheels. After my bicycle falls, I needed a bit of special help to get going. They suggested that maybe I could have an adult trike instead (a 3-wheeler). I got the trike and started to get around! An obstacle had been overcome!



We hear the promises of good news and God's grace, but then we take a reality check. Even with a tricycle, well-grounded on three wheels, I can still fall over if I take a corner too fast. When I do fall, I may need help getting over my injuries.

During Lent, we may have reflected on life. Even if we have a balanced and integrated life, the Apostle Paul says, "I delight in the law of God... but I am still captive to the sin in my embodied life..." (paraphrase, Rom 7:22-24). When I fall hardest, I need friends to help and encourage me to get back on track.



Just like potholes, obstacles to grace are common (and they can appear in front of us all the time!). This is when we most need friends to help pick us up and cheer us on – and this is what a good congregational family will do.

It has been a real privilege to spend a little more time with those who have been able to be online for the Lenten studies. It has been important for those who have been unwell or those who are grieving to be able to connect with faith friends over recent weeks. Part of our discipleship responsibility is to seek such relationships, both for our own wellbeing and as a responsibility towards the wellbeing of others.

Do you have someone you can turn to in this congregation if you need a prayer or a word of encouragement? Do you ever offer prayer or encouragements to others? We are called into being companions on the journey, like pilgrims, like the couple walking with Jesus on the Emmaus Road. Sometimes, our paths may take us in different directions, but for the time that we are on the same road, we should be intentional about encouraging one another.

Our Lent studies talked about First and Last Meals. We explored celebrations and sacrifices. Perhaps the time between Easter and Pentecost will be a time when you can try having a meal (or a chat) with someone you have not known so well pre-covid. As we come out of isolation, emerging like butterflies, we are invited into new life and new relationships and a renewal of spirit. I am looking forward to what the Holy Spirit might be drawing us towards!

24th March 2022 Church Council Meeting Update

1. Church Council Membership: Kerrie Springett welcomed to her first meeting (co-opted until elections can be held at the next Congregation meeting on June 19.)
2. Chinese language worship: Worship leader Esther Shih has advised of her departure from EUC. An appropriate thank you is being arranged.
3. Caring: Lesley Bradbury has resigned as Co-ordinator of the Caring Umbrella Group and was thanked for her service leading the pastoral care team. Church Council is grateful that Lesley will continue as a member of Church Council.
4. School Religious Education: Church Council was informed by Peggy Looby that Special Religious Education could not continue at Eastwood Public School due to the lack of an adequately trained and accredited person and COVID19 difficulties. The importance of SRE was highlighted and it is considered a mission priority.
5. Worship: 8.00am - Continue using Zoom, aiming for once a month on-site.
9.30am – Hybrid online and onsite, with morning tea.
Sunday School - Continue face-to-face at 9.30am, with zoom option.
11.00am – New small group mostly Cantonese language, continue as a trial until the end of April.
2.00pm – Mostly mandarin language, in a transitional stage due to Esther leaving.
6. Property: Noted various property maintenance and technology issues to be addressed by the Property Committee.
7. Vision: Planning day, for all staff, church leaders and CC to be held 14 May. Rev Ben Gilmore (Director of Vital Ministry Leadership, from Uniting Mission and Education) will assist on the day.

Next Church Council meeting: Thursday 28th April 2022.

Next Congregation meeting to be held on 19 June to:

Adopt a budget for 2022/2023

Elect members for Church Council and representative to Presbytery

Receive annual reports for 2021

If you have any matters that you wish to raise with Church Council, please contact myself or any other members: Emma Jarvis (Council Chair), Janelle Dodd (Treasurer), Rev. Dr. Amelia Koh-Butler (Minister), Rev. Tennyson Chan (Minister), Lesley Bradbury (Caring), John Brunton (Vision), Sylvia Huang, Jermaine Yan (Chinese worship), Jason Masters (Congregation rep), Mark Leal, Kerrie Springett.

Linda Brunton Congregation Chair

Welcome to our Ministry Field Student for this year ... BRENDON LUKIN

On Easter Sunday, I commence my Field Education Placement at Eastwood Uniting Church. I am a Third Year Ministry Candidate in Formation at United Theological College, North Parramatta. Although I am originally from Western Sydney, it has been 17 years since I last lived here. I am 51 years old and married to Cath who is a music teacher. Our 20-year-old son Dominic is also a musician and is studying at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music on tuba.



APRIL 2022

In my free time I enjoy playing organ, weaving, bread making and spending time on our alpaca farm.

I am looking forward to meeting everyone at Eastwood Uniting Church and getting to know you all.

My favourite Bible passage is Ezekiel 37 "The Valley of Dry Bones". I first heard it in church when I was 15 years old, not long after I had become a Christian. It still speaks to me to share the joy and hope of the Gospel.

Brendon Lukin

**Mary, Wife of Cleopas (of Emmaus)
Part 2**

Where is home
when there is no longer heart?
How shall we return
to try to live as if anything could be the same?
Our hearts are destitute with broken shards...
Sorrow upon sorrow,
Grief upon grief,
Tears upon tears...
What is left?

Where will this road take us?
Will Emmaus still be the Lord's,
when Rome has stamped itself
upon our most sacred of stories
and our rites and rituals?
Our hearts drift
between frustration and anger...
Where is our help
when we long to strike back?
Blow after blow,
kick after kick,
Strike after strike...
Where is hope?

Who is this stranger?
He knows so little of the last days.

Then he reframed our story.
He went back – teaching,
explaining slowly,
so we could follow.
Our hearts burned
with wonder and delight
to find a rabbi whose message
was full and rich and life-giving...
Here was good news!
Insight upon insight,
Hope upon hope,
Joy upon Joy...
Give us more?

What more can you tell us?
Sup with us, please.
Gift us with your presence.
We would have more of this good news.
Our hearts sang with delight
when he accepted our hospitality.
Then we arrived in Emmaus
and I prepared the meal.
We asked him for a blessing
and then we realized
the hospitality was his...
Bread of His Body,
Cup of His Covenant,
Life from His Death...
Eternity revealed.

(Luke 24:13-35)