



Burnside City

Uniting Church

Community, Faith and Purpose

A NOTE FROM LINDA...

APRIL 2015

Hello! This is an open letter to members of Burnside City Uniting Church and those interested, to thank you for the way you have welcomed and supported me as a newcomer to the church. I have been here for 11 months now and love being part of this church family.

I also would like to use this opportunity to update you on some things happening at BCUC, particularly on Sunday mornings:

My role as Pastor here includes oversight of ministry with young people aged 0 to 35. This means that I take a big-picture view of the ministries we offer to young people; support, encourage and equip our leaders; and provide pastoral care where appropriate.

Last year I spent a lot of time listening: getting to know the people at BCUC, getting to know what we do here, asking questions about why we do these things and working out what might be missing.

Part of this time of listening was spent with young people at Junior Church, finding out what they thought about what was being offered, and what their understanding of discipleship (living life as a follower of Jesus) is all about. This was a really helpful experience and I am grateful for the way they participated and shared honestly with me.

Alongside this, Junior Church leaders have been asking questions about the best way to support young

people through the middle and high school years on Sunday mornings.

Taking all this into account, the Junior Church leaders and I decided that for 2015 we would make a few changes, which you may have already noticed.

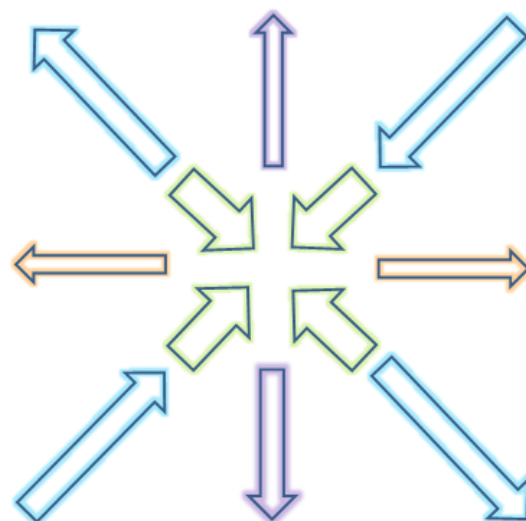
We decided to release older high school students (years 11 to 12) from Junior Church and invite them to attend and participate in the whole Contemporary worship service on Sunday mornings, as many have already been doing. Ben Randall, Youth Coordinator, will be available during Contemporary services to join them, support them, and respond to any questions they have during the service. They are also welcome to check out the other worship services on Sunday mornings: Classic or Café, both at 10.30am.

We hope in time, that they will feel welcome to participate further by joining the worship team (perhaps as a singer or muso, or doing the Bible Reading, leading us in prayer), joining the tech team, setting up morning tea or welcoming people at the door, etc. Perhaps there are other gifts that they have that they might like to offer? If so, they are being encouraged to contact Michelle Pruszinski or myself and we'll find a way for them to be involved.

Meanwhile a new Middle School class has started in Junior Church for youth in years 7 to 10. We have bought special resources for this group and hope this will be a space where adolescents can explore their faith and ask questions.

God reaches out to us in love, as Christian disciples we respond by

We look up
We look around
We look in
We look out
We invite in

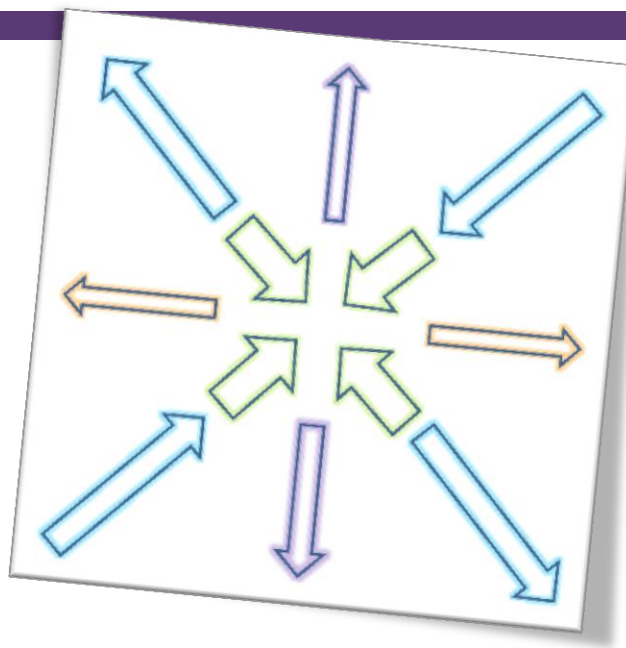


God loves.
We respond in..
Worship
Fellowship
Discipleship
Service
Evangelism

looking up in worship, looking inwards to grow our faith, looking sideways to grow Christian relationships, looking out to see and meet the needs of the world and invite others in to join this awesome life with Jesus. Each of us is unique and will express these things in different ways. Our priority is to provide a place where we all feel we belong as part of this community of faith, are given opportunities to grow in our relationship with Jesus and are able to use our Spirit-given gifts to serve in life-giving ways.

Finally, I understand that when I started here I used a word that some young people found unhelpful¹. I am now thinking differently about how young people (and new people to the church) can mark milestones in their faith journey.

For some this could be baptism (or re-affirmation of baptism), for some, a public testimony of faith (in church or at a youth event), for some, a formal way of becoming a member of the church and for others a celebration of what God has done in their life. Everyone is different and we want to support young people (in fact, all people), whenever they feel the time is right to mark a milestone in their own faith journey.



¹The word I used was "confirmation". For some this was unhelpful.

For your information, confirmation in the Uniting Church provides an opportunity for people who have been baptised as a baby to make a public declaration of faith when they are old enough to make their own decision and to be formally welcomed as a member of the Uniting Church. This might be relevant to if they wish to publicly give their testimony, and especially if they wish to explore a call to specified ministry in the Uniting Church some time in the future.

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A new resource for young people

One particular area I heard that some young people would like to grow in is *developing personal faith*. I have done some research and have found **devozine**.

(<http://devozine.upperroom.org/>)

This devotional magazine is designed for young people by young people.

I have presented a free copy to all young people, years 10-12 who participate in worship on Sundays. They have been invited to check it out, give it a go, and let me know

if this is something they would find helpful to do regularly. If so, I'm hoping to seek out sponsors from our church family to pay for an annual subscription for them.

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter. Please do contact me if you have any questions.

Blessings,
Linda☺