



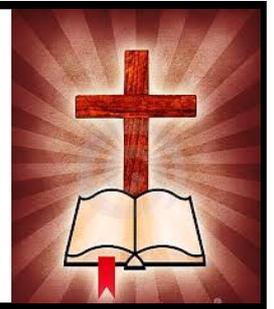
# THE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Emerald/Fernlees Uniting Church

Cnr. Borilla & Yamala Sts., Emerald

[www.emeraldunitingchurch.org.au](http://www.emeraldunitingchurch.org.au)

13TH JUNE & 20TH JUNE



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## Jim's Jottings 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021: a COVID-19 Reflection

I received the following letter in the post a couple of weeks ago. Melinda Dwight is the National Director of Alpha. She picks up the stupefying effect of COVID on some churches and calls God's people back to a mission focussed outlook. At the outbreak of the epidemic, I wrote about it as a spiritual and not just a medical battle. Post COVID, I know here in Emerald how challenging it has been for me to discern those ways the Spirit would have us step forward anew. I am thankful for those who have provided a lead in this space. Our extended teaching series on *Following Jesus* is another step along this path. I believe we have done Alpha in this church in the past, and individual members of the church have done it privately. If you sense the need to re-visit this or any other gospel initiative, please talk to me or an elder.

Jim Pearson

**Mission Statement**  
As Followers of Christ we seek to know Him: worship Him and share His love with all people

### Regular Meetings

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday:** Bring & share lunch after church

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday:** Church Council/ Worship & Pastoral Care Meeting at the Church office

### Galatians 5:22

<sup>22</sup>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,



*"There has been so much to consume our attention in recent times. Endless news cycles of drama and tragedy have left many weary, while the collective resumption of life post-COVID continues to reveal chasms in society. We have seen the gap between rich and poor continue to widen, and the disproportionate impacts on those already vulnerable to unemployment, to domestic violence, and many other disadvantages.*

*"Across Australian churches, we have also seen a divide emerge between those who are looking only at church-maintenance post-COVID and those who are determined to focus on mission. The mission, as it has been since Jesus spoke the words aloud, is to make His last command our first priority. No matter the content of our news cycle, no matter the challenges and opportunities we face, the imperative of evangelism remains for every single believer....*

*"COVID has shaken people's perception they are in control of their lives.*

*More people than ever are searching online for answers to life, faith and meaning. Our communities, friends and family are more open to spirituality. In fact, recent research shows one in four Australians would consider coming to church if someone asked them and four out of five Australian's are open to a spiritual conversation....*

*"The imperative of evangelism applies to us all – personally and collectively. (Melinda's red)*

*"I'm so pleased to share over the past twelve months we have seen incredible growth in the use of Alpha as a tool for evangelism across all regions of Australia and across a diversity of settings. Over 52,000 people participated in Alpha, and many thousands came to faith for the first time. A huge portion - 40,000 - took part online.*

*"Our digital impact and influence has exceeded our hopes and expectations. Our introduction of Alpha Online has led to the inclusion of people previously unable or unwilling to physically go to a church. Those with disabilities, those with young children, and those who don't feel comfortable to set foot in a church building have all been able to take part. In this way, Alpha continues to overcome barriers to faith....*

*"You are valued gospel partners. Thank you for your prayers, your generosity and your partnership which is being invested for many thousands of Australians to explore faith through Alpha. The seeds of our work, watered by the Holy Spirit and increased by God, will make an eternal difference in many Australians."*