

M U C

Magazine

The News and Views of the
Murrumbeena Uniting Church



To make Christ known by preaching the
gospel in word and deed

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The Uniting Church in Australia
MURRUMBEENA UNITING CHURCH

April – May 2021

MINISTRY TEAM

REV. JAY ROBINSON

Minister

jay@murrumbidgeeanauniting.org.au

0410 465 836



PASTOR KELLY SKILTON

Pastor for the Young Adults and the Sonder Collective.

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ZAK HANYN

Families' and Children's Ministry Coordinator.

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CHURCH COUNCIL



CHAIR:

**Alison Campbell
Rate**

0438 569 690



TREASURER:

Greg Pressey



Doug Faram

Also responsible for Pastoral Care
0422 033 283



Jo Petzer



Rachel Dart
Minutes Secretary



Margaret Reid



Dave Robinson
Correspondence Secretary

ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

Community Garden
Craft Circle
Drop In
Adult Fellowship
Friendship Fellas (Men's Group)
LIFT (Women's Group)

THE CHURCH

Adult Bible Studies
Pastoral Care
Worship Band
Lending Library

YOUNG ADULTS (18-35)

Getaway
Sonder Collective
Studies
Sunday Brunch

YOUTH (13-17)

Camps
Youthy

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Families
» F.E.A.S.T
» Family Craft Days
» Family Movie Days
Kids
» Countdown to Christmas
» Kids' Time
mainly music

**GLENDAL
LEIGH**

Culture of Safety
contact person
9568 8177

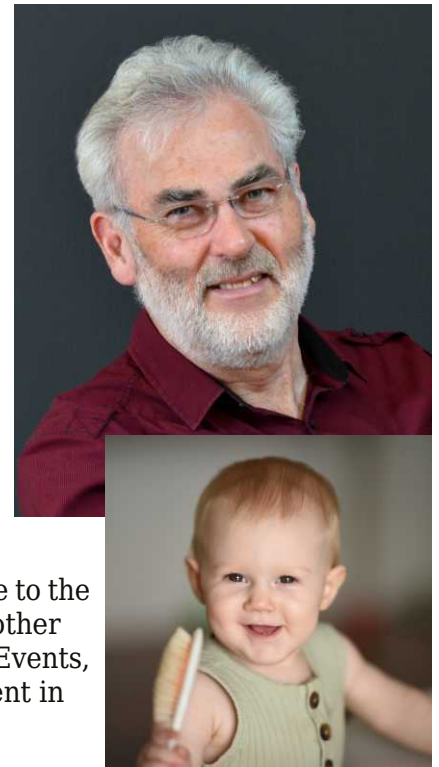


In my Editorial for the February/March edition of the MUC MAG, I said I swapped my Editor's hat for the "Chair of the Congregation" hat, exhorting you to participate in discussions about the mission directions we should take. Keeping that hat on, I would like to thank everyone who prepared submissions for the Annual Report presented at our AGM on 21st March, and in particular Greg Pressey for the financial reports and the budget, and both Alison Campbell Rate and Jay Robinson for the background work regarding the Money for Mission programme and other aspects that came up for discussion during the AGM. I also thank all those who attended and participated in the AGM - probably not the most interesting hour they have spent this year!

That said, I missed the first of the organised bunch discussions which was held on 14th March. A bit of a shame, but justifiable as I was in Brisbane spending quality time with our 10-month-old granddaughter (see photo) - a trip that was scheduled well before the bunch discussions were planned.

Putting my Editor's hat back on, I had intended to revert the magazine to the earlier format of providing the rosters on the back cover, but with the other more interesting articles, plus the inclusion of the Calendar of Coming Events, there wasn't the space. It is a good thing that Sue in the office is diligent in putting the roster information in the Pew Sheet each week.

Roger McCowan



Please e-mail articles to: triumphguru@gmail.com, or hand them to Roger on a Sunday, preferably no later than 16th May.

CONTACTS

With the easing of COVID19 restrictions, some group activities are resuming (see Calendar on the back cover). If you wish to find out a bit more about any one of the groups, the contact details for the various groups that host these events are given here.

Thursday Pancake Drop-In

Pam Wight 0459 226 070

Knitting and Craft Circle

Glynis Ramsay 0407 506 662

Friendship Fellas

Roger McCowan 0439 711 381

Geoff Edwards 0409 568 206

Lending Library

Anne Don 9578 4217

LIFT

Mary-Lou Keur 0409 937 727

Roz Franklin 0403 762 695

Murrumbeena Uniting Afternoon Fellowship Group

Anne Don 9578 4217

Sonder Collective

Kelly Skilton 0432 714 758

Murrumbeena Community Garden

Kay Pentland

Glynis Ramsay 0407 506 662

mainly music

9568 8177

Women's Bible Study

Alison Campbell Rate

0438 569 690

As well as our own website at <https://www.murrumbeenauniting.org.au/> you might find the following links of interest (if you haven't already).

facebook.com/murrumbeenauniting/ - Live stream of 10:00am Worship and Service

murrumbeenauniting.online.church - Live stream of 10:00am Worship and Service

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-v0xIBPkGfZJcOl062yCjg/> - recorded Service

FROM THE MINISTER...

April is upon us, we have the end of Daylight Savings, Easter is here, and we are able to celebrate together this year!

The journey towards Easter is always a long one but I tend to find that it is one filled with reflection and connection. We've been sharing in challenging words, considering challenging opportunities and trying to listen for the word of God in all that we are doing. We've begun our Bunch Groups to help us listen to each other, but ultimately our Bunch Groups are there to help us connect better with each other, maybe gather socially from time to time, give those who cannot attend Sunday worship an opportunity to get with others. Hopefully they will give us all a chance to get to know others whom we do not know well. I would hope they will also become conduits for new people to be welcomed into and encouraged to become part of our family here. It will take some work, some patience and some creativity, but we'll see what comes of these gatherings.



As we consider and discern where it is God is calling us to, we will continue to look back to our vine for our nurture. Remembering our theme for this year "I am the vine and you are the branches" it is becoming a time of watching for fruit, being aware of the dead leaves and keeping us as healthy as we can be. I also want to assure you that Murrumbeena UC is not the only congregation who is looking closely at their mission vs their outreach, what is it that makes us 'us', and how do we fund it all. Unfortunately, COVID 19 has left many churches with these sorts of decisions ahead of them.

One of the trends of this time of being about to gather again is that a large number of congregational members are still staying away. Now this may not change until the vaccine is more widely available (and I am not going to have a conversation around whether to get the vaccine or not!). As more and more people feel confident about getting out into society again, physical attendance numbers should begin to increase. That being said, we have already returned to our numbers of the beginning of 2020. There have been new people join us, there are some who are still staying home, and numbers are up and down from week to week, but we are doing well compared to some who are saying they are still missing around 1/4 of their people.

Technology is allowing us to reach more and more people, to spread the gospel, but I want to remind you that we are people who work best in relationship with others and with God. It is easier to be in relationship with someone when we can meet and share in person, it is not the only way but it is easier. Carol Faram shared an article about church attendance with us via Facebook. Now I know that not all of you are on Facebook so I thought I would share it here in the MUC Mag this month (see page 10). It is certainly worth a read and some reflection.

On the journey with you...

Jay Robinson

LECTIONARY FOR APRIL/MAY

On the opposite page you'll find readings and themes for the weeks following Easter. I do have to say that these are not all finalised as yet. Just like everything else, our forward planning is not quite as locked in as the ministry team would normally like it, but we are continuing with the Narrative Lectionary and these are the readings that take us to Pentecost Sunday, Sunday 23rd May.

As we move forward from Pentecost Sunday we have the opportunity to explore a series of readings or themes again. Jay is suggesting we look at "Doing Church" "Being Church" and "The Sacraments". We'll use various readings from both Old and New Testament, but we'll also see where the Spirit may lead us - we should have a better idea by the end April.

LECTIONARY FOR APRIL/MAY

Another opportunity we may get to be involved in is worshipping with the GMIM Immanuel UCA partner congregation, whom we are in conversation with about the use of our buildings for their worship in their own language, but also in times when we can share worship together and explore a little of each other's styles. This is still a conversation that is happening, with decisions to come from Church Council once details are sorted out, but it could be an exciting opportunity to worship with others.

1 st April	Luke 22:1-27	Maundy Thursday
2 nd April		Good Friday
4 th April	Luke 24:1-12	Easter Sunday/Communion
11 th April	Emmaus Road Luke 24:13-35	Companionship, Hospitality, Fellowship, Relationship
18 th April	Disciple Acts 6:1-7:2a, 44-60	Stephen's liberating grace
25 th April	Baptism Acts 8:26-39	What can prevent me from being baptised?
2 nd May	Grace Acts 15:1-18	What is the nature of the church?
9 th May	Love - Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21	Trust in God's Grace
16 th May	Inclusive - Galatians 3:1-9, 23-29	Free climbing faithful
23 rd May	Pentecost - Acts 2:1-4, Gal.4:1-7 (5:16-26)	Empowered Truth-Sayers
30 th May	Doing Church Psalm 100	Joy
6 th June	Doing Church Psalm 13	How long?

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

I have heard a lot of rumblings about, 'Why have the youth and young adults not started anything for this year yet?' And though it might seem like we're not doing anything specific, there have been studies, messages, church services and coffees happening the last couple of months while restrictions continue to ease. Though, the real reason why we have yet to 'start back' again is because we are all tired. In the midsts of work, university, family, friends... being able to see one another face-to-face is more overwhelming than it is exciting. Rather than adding to our anxieties and stressors, a slower start to our community gathering meant that a lot of people could ease back in with a greater sense of joy.



And so what is it that we have planned for 2021?

If you have not been on the email thread then our start date might have escaped you. We are going to be kicking off on April 18 with Sonderfy - Sonder, For You. We are going to move our youth and young adults communities into one night, together. But what would this night look like?

Our hopes is that we will meet for two hours on the first and third Sunday's of the month. During this time we will share in community with worship, a message, study groups, dinner and dessert. I am so excited about this step forward where we will be able to focus on what it means to be disciples as a community together; as well as what it means for our own personal identity as followers of Christ.

As always, there is no age limit - in fact, I am hoping to get a larger group of leaders available so be prepared in case I tap you on the shoulder.

Having this as our all-in community night, I hope, will mean people can be excited to come together, and continue to engage with one another and our faith. Bring on 2021 and this adventure.

P's Kelly Skilton

Dear people of Murrumbidgee Uniting,

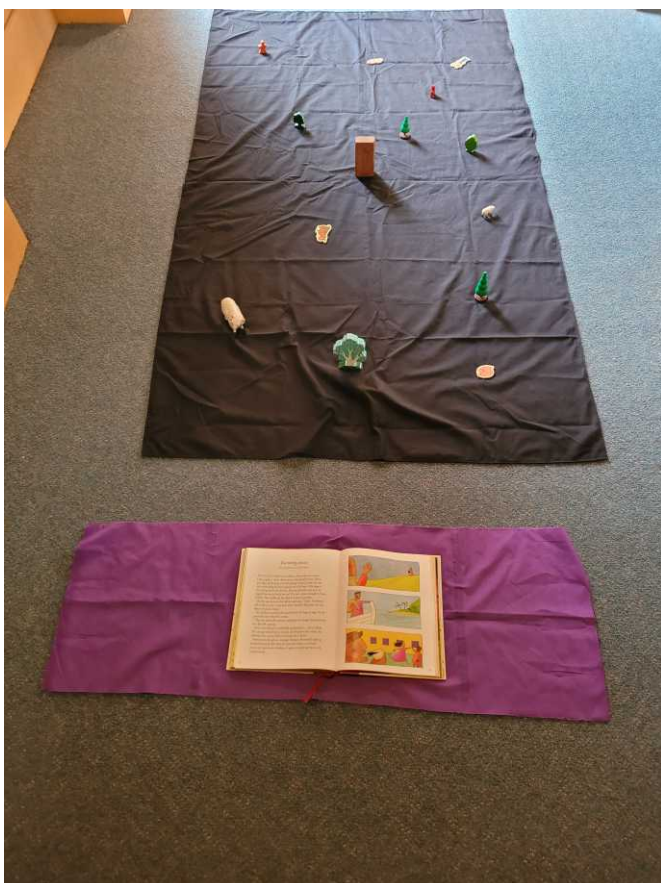
Hard to think that the year is moving so quickly, Easter is a couple of weeks away and the crisp Autumn weather has set in. There is much to update you all on about the Ministry to Children and Families. After a break over summer, we have hit the ground running and I am realising this is my first time since starting here that we are at some sort of normal, and a new routine has set in. We are progressing in keeping with the Narrative Lectionary, we want to ensure that the same stuff the adults are exploring the kids do too, so that hopefully you all may have conversations round the dinner table or, whenever you speak as a family. We prepared for Lent with a belated Shrove Tuesday (photo attached), pancake making with the kids, which was plenty of fun. We also talked about the history of the day and what it meant and why we went into Lent. We are preparing now for the Palm Sunday service, and Holy Week, there will be some fun things going on, games, prayer, stories and more. We are starting a new program style of Godly Play, meets the Jesus Storybook Bible plus a little bit of Zak magic thrown in (photo attached), not to forget as well the imagination of the kids and other volunteers. Speaking of the volunteers, thanks to Rachel, Carol, Glenda and Marg for stepping up and being involved as Ministry leaders on a monthly basis, your ideas, personality and presence have a positive impact on the lives of the young people. If others are interested, please let me know. As usual I have asked for a reflection from a family to share how they are interacting with the Ministry and how it is impacting them. Here are Jen's words:



Great wall of dominoes



Shrove Sunday - making



The lost trilogy - Godly Play



Shrove Sunday - ta da!

Zak has been a breath of fresh air at Murrumbeena Uniting Church. His vibrant and open-minded approach to ministry has been very much appreciated by Adrian and I. I find his enthusiasm and bubbly personality infectious.

One of the first questions he asked me when reaching out to our family during the 2020 COVID lockdown was, 'What are Adrian's interests? How can I best cater for Adrian at church?' This showed that he didn't require children to fall into line at church, he wanted to teach them about God in a way that celebrated their individual needs and explored their strengths.

Adrian loves learning by doing and Zak provides a variety of activities that provide Adrian with these experiences. He organises fun running games in the hall to cater for Adrian, along with hands on activities such as cooking pancakes!

I thoroughly enjoyed Zak's sermon last week. His perspective on the Bible readings and willingness to share his personal stories on the lectern were admirable. I hope to hear many more sermons from Zak in the near future.

I was thrilled when I found out that Zak was volunteering at Murrumbeena Primary School at the SAKG program as it is a wonderful way to engage with the wider Murrumbeena community.

Zak has reengaged Adrian back in to church and I feel very grateful for this.

Jeneeta Kepa

Thanks Jen, glad to hear your perspectives. We are moving into our bunch groups which are a part of this new COVID normal world we find ourselves in. The year has brought with it new opportunities along with time for reflection also. The main new thing I have got involved with locally is being a part of Murrumbeena Primary School's Kitchen Garden Program. This has been an amazing opportunity to connect with the broader community and the cohort of students, teachers and parents. I will attach a photo of the food we made the first week. It has been a delight to be in the school greatly, build connections and be actively present within our community of Murrumbeena. I look forward to the rest of what the year brings and am open to hearing from the Spirit and others on new or different directions.

Until next time.

Blessings,

Zak.



Murrumbeena Primary Cooking



Murrumbeena Primary Garden



Zak in pink tutu 'cleaning' the storeroom

COURTYARD MAKEOVER



2008



2010



2021

Our courtyard was created back in 2007/2008 when the Church buildings were redeveloped. It was planted with three ornamental pear trees and the ground covered with pavers.

Over time, the trees grew and grew, providing great shade, but creating a trip hazard with raised pavers.

Come 2021, it was time for a makeover. Based on Erin's design, the courtyard was dug over, pavers removed (which will be used in the Community Garden), and fresh toppings brought in. A new garden bed was also created and the liriopes that had been there, relocated.

This was done in a weekend, with a working bee on Saturday 27th February, and after the Church Service on Sunday 28th February.

Thanks to Erin and Dave in particular, and to everyone who contributed their time and energy into making the walk-way to the office safer under foot.

Glynis Ramsay

SATURDAY TEAM



Erin



Dave



Bruce



New plants

Kangaroo Paw

Correa pulchella 'Pink Mist'

Westringia fruticosa 'Wynyabbie Gem'

Myoporum parvifolium 'Fine leaf form'

SATURDAY TEAM – CONTINUED



Colin



Greg



Paul

SUNDAY TEAM

Erin, Dave, Greg, Warren, Phoenix, Zen, Roz, Doug, Brendan, Bruce, Geo

Only a couple of photos taken on Sunday



Peter



"Glynis"

My new social-distancing outfit just arrived from Amazon.



ALISTAIR BEGG ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Dear Friend,

I think I caused a little confusion when I mentioned that *Truth For Life* is going to discontinue the livestream of Parkside's Sunday morning service. I hasten to add that the livestream will continue to be available on Parkside's website. Our reason for this change is that *Truth For Life* is committed to the ministry of the local church, and we regard our role as supplemental to the hard work of the local pastor. I



I am a pastor, and my concern, along with my colleagues, is for the flock under our care. We want to do nothing that would hinder the work taking place Sunday by Sunday in local congregations.

The reason for our decision lies in the growing number of listeners who, by their testimony, are growing quite comfortable with a digital experience. Life has changed dramatically during the last year, and changes that initially felt temporary are beginning to become settled patterns. A year ago, most of us thought that "Zooming" was something that happened in an open-top car. Now our family rooms have become venues for our virtual church experiences. Let me hasten to say that we recognize the difference between convenience and the necessary and valuable benefit of online church for those who are housebound either temporarily or on a long-term basis. It is a special privilege to stream the service and to be welcomed into your homes.

My concern is with those who are forsaking their local gathering for the comfortable option of the spiritual equivalent of DoorDash and Uber Eats. These unusual days provide us with an opportunity to examine what we understand and believe about the local church. The English word **church** translates the Greek word **ekklesia**, which means "the called out together". Sometimes in our Communion service, we remind ourselves of the wonder of having been given new life in Jesus and having been made members of God's family. We sing, "We're the people of God, called by His name, called from the dark and delivered from shame, one holy race, saints every one, because of the blood of Christ Jesus, the Son." None of our natural families are perfect, but they are where we belong and where we should want to be. Zoom calls with my son, daughter-in-law, and new grandson are fine but a poor substitute for being in each other's company. We should feel the same way about our church families.

We have yet to see what things will look like when everything returns to normal. Will there be a resurgence of commitment to the gathering of God's people, or will the COVID habits have taken hold? Mums and dads must take the lead in seeing that their children are learning the importance of our gatherings by resisting the temptation to drift into a settled pattern of individualized religion.

We do well to remember these words from Hebrews 10:24-25:

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

With my love in the Lord Jesus,

Alistair Begg is Senior Pastor at Parkside Church in Cleveland, Ohio, and the Bible teacher on *Truth For Life*, which is heard on the radio and online around the world.

https://blog.truthforlife.org/alistair-begg-on-the-importance-of-church-attendance?src=21SPBC0C&utm_content=153151440&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&hss_channel=fbp-47823137261&fbclid=IwAR1vDIKZrMRePzIXvKvKLWypJ5dVQGBVZjZur7zIvC5kL9BiB4WXL-1zqo

'FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON ...'

As I begin this thank you to you all from the youngest to the oldest at MUC, I want to encourage you that your part however small in the church family is of the utmost importance to the overall wellbeing of the church and its continuing influence in the community.

Our days were always numbered, as we were living in a temporary housing situation when you welcomed us in, and now we are permanently domiciled in Cheltenham, it's time for us to worship at the church next door. As is written in Ecclesiastes, there is a time for everything.

In thanking each and every one of you I want you to know how you ministered to us over the past three years in the hope that you will see you are all an important part of the body of Christ.

Firstly the families. Your presence on a Sunday morning is vital to the life of the church. Seeing the children participate, watching them grow, encountering their darling faces touched our hearts deeply.

When we first began attending there were more youth on a Sunday morning. Young people and adults, you gladden the heart of older people just by the fact that you make time to be with us.

It is always encouraging to see the seats well occupied on Sundays but of course we've been robbed of that over the past year.

However another group of people who always inspired me were people whose health has abandoned them. How inspiring to see you come despite your pain and suffering.

Then the people in the middle who have become our close friends. No-one knows the longing of another's heart. But when you've moved locations as much as we have you need new friends. We could not have asked for more.

I would like to use my gift of exhortation and encouragement to say to you all:

- » I know you are rich in assets and poor in income. However your assets are the people. Many churches would give their 'eye teeth' to have children, 90-year-olds and every age in between;
- » The music team would also be the envy of many a church;
- » The non-judgemental acceptance of everyone who steps inside the door isn't practised in all churches.
- » The buildings, and in particular the foyer are very beautiful;
- » What an amazing outdoor area and community garden;
- » Men's and women's fellowship is a great asset and has been a blessing for us.

So thank you, thank you for being a church we could call home for the past 3 years while in limbo.

In closing I recently heard "if we don't radically remake religion we won't make it through the next 100 years." I'd go even further and say the next 50 years.

We can't stay the same, the world around us is rapidly changing and new generations don't connect with the old ways. We need "new wine in new wineskins".

Go for it Murrumbidgee UC, we'll stay connected.

In love, Pam and Nev Wight

FRIENDSHIP FELLAS

Looking forward to 2021, stricter health measures colour our programme. Our night gatherings/dinners will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month, alternating between the church and Chai Thai restaurant in Murrumbidgee, with a slightly changed format, as follows.

In each even-numbered month, the gathering will be in church foyer at 5:30pm. The meal will comprise bulk order takeaway food distributed by one person with gloves and tongs. BYO food is also possible. There will be some furniture cleaning needed afterwards, and minimal washing up. Dates: 27 April, 22 June, 24 August, 26 October, and 14 December (two weeks earlier, for Christmas).

For each alternate month, the dinner will be at Chai Thai, Murrumbidgee, 5:30pm. Dates: 23 March, 25 May, 27 July, 28 September, and 23 November.

Factors behind the changes include COVID concerns, the ability to have talks with some confidentiality at both venues, and the close availability of the church car park and toilet/washing facilities and takeaway venues.

Members are aging and their needs changing. Their need for male togetherness is also increasing.

Church members who wish to join are welcome to ask Roger or Geoff.

Geoff Edwards and Roger McCowan

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Date	Time	Event
Mon, 29 Mar	7:30pm – 8:15pm	Holy Week Service
Tue, 30 Mar	7:30pm – 8:15pm	Holy Week Service
Wed, 31 Mar	7:30pm – 8:15pm	Holy Week Service
Thu, 1 Apr	10:30am – 11:30am	Worship Service at Regis
	7:30pm – 8:30pm	Maundy Thursday Service
Fri, 2 Apr	9:30am – 10:30am	Good Friday Service
	10:30am – 12:00pm	Hot Cross Bun morning tea (following worship)
Sat, 3 Apr	2:00pm – 5:00pm	Craft Group
Sun, 4 Apr	10:00am – 11:00am	Easter Sunday Worship (Holy Communion)
Wed, 7 Apr	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Church Council
Fri, 9 Apr	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sat, 10 Apr	8:00am – 9:00am	Friendship Fellas' Breakfast
	2:00pm – 5:00pm	Craft Group
Sun, 11 Apr	10:00am – 11:30am	Worship
Fri, 16 Apr	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sun, 18 Apr	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship
	5:30pm – 7:00pm	Sonder Collective
Thu, 22 Apr	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Bible Study
Fri, 23 Apr	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sat, 24 Apr	9:00am – 10:30am	LIFT Women's Breakfast
Sun, 25 Apr	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship (ANZAC Day)
	11:30am – 12:30pm	Library and Lunch
Tue, 27 Apr	5:30pm – 7:30pm	Friendship Fellas' Dinner
Wed, 28 Apr	11:00am – 12:00pm	Worship Service at Victoria by the Park
Thu, 29 Apr	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Bible Study
Fri, 30 Apr	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sat, 1 May	10:30am – 11:30am	Worship Service at Regis
	2:00pm – 5:00pm	Craft Group
Sun, 2 May	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship (Holy Communion)
Wed, 5 May	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Church Council
Thu, 6 May	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Bible Study
Fri, 7 May	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sat, 8 May	8:00am – 9:00am	Friendship Fellas' Breakfast
Sun, 9 May	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship
Thu, 13 May	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Bible Study
Fri, 14 May	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sun, 16 May	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship
	5:30pm – 7:00pm	Sonder Collective
		Deadline for submission of articles for MUC Mag
Thu, 20 May	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Bible Study
Fri, 21 May	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sat, 22 May	9:00am – 10:30am	LIFT Women's Breakfast
Sun, 23 May	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship
Tue, 25 May	5:30pm – 7:00pm	Friendship Fellas' Dinner
Thu, 27 May	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Bible Study
Fri, 28 May	10:30am – 11:30am	Coffee with Jay
Sun, 30 May	10:00am – 11:00am	Worship
Tue, 1 Jun	10:30am – 11:30am	Worship Service at Regis
Wed, 2 Jun	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Church Council
Thu, 3 Jun	7:30pm – 9:00pm	Bible Study