

North Lake Macquarie Uniting Congregation

Office: 342 Hillsborough Road, Warners Bay NSW 2282, Ph: (02) 4956-5544

E-Mail: nlmu@bigpond.net.au;

Website: nlmunitingchurch.com

Postal Address: P.O. Box 352, Warners Bay, 2282.



Minister: Rev. Dr. Kenneth Brown

Ph: 0422 526 269; **Email:** kennethbrown.nlmchurch@gmail.com

G'day my Friends,

I hope this letter continues to find you and your family well. I also hope your faith has been a comfort to you in these times: if it has, how has it been a comfort?

Our Bible spans thousands of years, across several countries, languages, cultures and religious faiths. It contains faith stories spanning all of that. It contains life events: experiences that were good and bad, horrendous and magnificent, hellish and glorious. The Psalm writers record these in vivid detail – where people sang out their life and faith experience. Many of the Psalms were no doubt not written in one sitting or from one experience (by one individual), but are a gathering of stories and experiences of many people into one Psalm. Psalm 23 for example, speaks of the godly experience of calm quiet waters and blessed rest; it speaks of the experience of dread when walking through the valley of the shadow with danger nearby; it speaks of warring times, enemies around and of eating with them; and then it speaks of one's impending death and one's faith when facing it. All of these events from many people or yes, perhaps from one individual's 'all of life experience' is then summed up in that great Psalm.

How would you write a Psalm called 'Psalm 2020'? How would you tell of your initial hearing of Covid-19? How would you tell of it being a world pandemic? How would you tell of it being up close and personal? Did you fear for yourself, were you fearful for others, what made you angry or rage and what did you celebrate? Where in particular did you see the Lord? What were your prayers? You were unable to see family, friends, or attend church, what did your faith say to you in the face of these?

When the Northern Kingdom of the Holy Land (Judah) was conquered and its people taken into captivity to Babylon (750 years before Jesus) – the people sought to keep their faith. How did you keep your faith in 'isolation'? The Jews in captivity mourned the loss of their temple and were mocked... They were taunted with, "Sing us one of your faith songs." Their response was, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps.137:4). How do you feel at not being able to sing in church when we return? Perhaps like this: "Though I could not sing with my mouth my spirit gave voice, I sang with my heart and in God my soul rejoiced!"

We will have opportunity to share our faith stories. You might start writing! It would be great to hear your faith story of this time. Please be assured that all steps are being taken for a safe church return for you (August 2nd). We'll be 'together again' soon... just 'praising the Lord.' Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The peace of the Lord Jesus be with you all,

"And also with you Kenneth." Amen.

Kenneth.