

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Changing Communities, Changing Lives

As the clouds part, blue sky emerges above and light fills the world. It was there all along, but circumstances of environment and atmosphere prevented us from experiencing it. I kind of like cloudy days; they encourage me to seek solace in the comfort of smaller, warm spaces, warm soup and crusty bread by the fire. They make me move slower, think longer, spend more time in deep conversation. Lots of time here also makes me yearn for spring, as my mind and body can only move slowly for some of the time; after all, we were created to move.

With the nation beginning to exit hibernation from COVID-19 and a time of cloudy days, the church must consider how it will respond to renewed freedom of movement and gathering in our society. While we are a little way off opening the doors to our church buildings, it is a wonderful time to start reflecting deeply on why we have them (buildings) in the first place, and how we will use them to live out the mission of the church into the future.

We have experienced wonderful connection through online worship, prayer, activities and fellowship, yet we know there is a special place for physical gathering. What does that look like for us now? Will we go back to the 'same old, same old' program when a new way of life is being experienced? COVID-19 has changed us as a community, and now we must ask ourselves 'how do we transform ourselves anew, reimagining how we can live as disciples?'



This edition of the Herald is dedicated to each of you, our volunteers. The church is a collection of people who care, and we've selected but a few of you to share stories of how giving has changed your life. It reflects on how we as people contribute to God's creative works, through discernment and encounter. We hear stories of people in the community giving of themselves generously, through their response to the Spirit's work in their lives. We read of the work done by Health Ministries Association as a direct result of the work the Australia church did through

passing its resolution on Domestic and Family Violence. Finally, we share a tribute to Ralph Ferrett who was an incredible witness of God's love in our lives.

The invitation is in front of us: Will we become who God is calling us to become? The road back does not take us to where we started, indeed, COVID-19 has taken us on a new path which doesn't connect with our old ways. Let us imagine a new reality where 'the heart of the church [becomes] communities of people being formed together in Christ for the sake of the world.' Let us break forth from the clouds and bask in the blue sky, moving into a time of growth in spirit all over the country. May we use the time of restoration we've had to create new possibilities with vigor and passion.

*Ben Smith*

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