



Dear Friends,

I mentioned on Sunday, I have been doing some – slow - mountain climbing over the past two weeks (specifically the Routeburn Track) and was reminded, thinking of the journey we have gone through as a church and the journey that lies ahead, of Psalm 18:31-33. (This is the King James With Inclusive Pronouns By Belinda Version!) ***“For who is God save the Lord? Or who is a rock save our God? It is God that girdeth us with strength, and maketh our way perfect. God maketh our feet like hinds' feet, and setteth us upon high places.”***

It was a big Sunday for me last Sunday! After discussions with the deacons, I announced I intend to step back from the role of team leader in early 2027. This long-range announcement gives the church the opportunity to seek a new team leader during this year, through a process which will be agreed at the church meeting on the 22nd of February. Aron and I are not leaving Canberra, however, and I am available for other smaller ministry roles, in addition to my Open Baptist work, in the future.

But, in the meantime, there is all of 2026 ahead of us! And several significant events coming up!

This Friday (13 Feb) at 2pm we are gathering to celebrate the life of Dorothy McMaster, wife of Rev Fred McMaster who pastored this church from 1952 to 1980, and much loved by our congregation. There will be afternoon tea after the service and, if you are able, ***please bring a plate of something to share!***

The following weekend is our Church Anniversary and our guest preacher on Sunday (22 Feb) will be Dr Joel Hollier.

Joel is a research fellow in the University of Sydney's *Faculty of Medicine and Health*, and his research explores critical approaches to mental health and wellbeing, particularly thinking about religion, queerness, and policy frameworks here in Australia and internationally. He was formerly pastor of New City Church in Glebe and helped create the Future Church

Conference (which Steve, Rebecca and I have attended and really enjoyed). It will be wonderful to have him speak to us for our anniversary.

But Joel is also one of the best speakers I have ever heard, so we invited him to come on Saturday (21 Feb) as well and run a half day workshop (which will include lunch) from 10am to 2pm on *Trauma-Informed Church Practices: Creating Communities of Safety and Healing*. For anyone who is passionate about creating inclusive spaces, this session will offer tools and insights to help the church embody compassion and resilience. **Registrations close Tuesday (17 Feb) – one week from today! You can register simply by sending me an email – belinda@canbap.org.**

The weekend after that (Fri-Sun, 27 Feb to 1 March) is Church Camp! This is one of the highlights for the year for our family! If you have not been before, it is a super relaxed weekend where you can choose your own adventure - going for a swim, walking on the beach, playing board games, reading the paper – all while getting to know people from church a little better.

The best thing is you don't have to worry about food! All of that is covered by the organisers for the incredible price of \$40 for adults and \$20 for children under 12. [Click here to register today!!](#)

If you want to camp or have a motorhome you (also) need to book your accommodation directly with [Holiday Haven Lake Tabourie](#), but if you'd like to stay in the bunkhouses (pre-booked by the church) please read the info about these in the registration link. The bunkhouses sleep 6 and are great for a household or group.

"It is God that girdeth us with strength, and maketh our way perfect..." In the joys and the challenges of the year ahead I am mindful that God is walking with us – and that I am part of a great group of hikers – Canberra Baptist Church!

Grace and peace be with you,

Belinda