

## Peter Blair's story



Lighting a candle for worship, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Today as I light the candle I am lighting in the little Oratory in the back yard of my house in Gracetree, a small Baptist community in Coburg. When I open the blinds in the morning I am greeted by this little chapel. It is a beautiful space, a small octagonal building that is our prayer and contemplation space.

The candle I am lighting is one that was given to me during my time with UNOH (Urban Neighbours of Hope), a missional order that is part of the Churches of Christ. My world before arriving at Brunswick Uniting and before doing my theological studies was spent in UNOH, working alongside such luminaries as BUC's very own Brad and Colleen Coath! UNOH helped shape and form the values and the theological underpinnings that eventually led me to Olive Way. I am grateful for the 15 years I spent working with various UNOH teams.

I am lighting this candle from the flame that is continually lit in the oratory. This reminder of God's presence with us is never extinguished. We use a beautifully scented rose oil to fuel the lamp, the icon above it changes with the liturgical seasons of the church.

As I light the candle I am reminded of these three faith communities that I have been a part of, that have shaped me and formed me. UNOH, Brunswick Uniting, and Gracetree; all different denominationally, but all of the same heart. I am reminded of God's presence with us even whilst we are scattered; that presence that holds us, forms us, loves us, and cares for us in all occasions, dark and light.

The words of the liturgy come from a Collect of the Community of the Transfiguration, a Baptist monastic order based in Teesdale and one of the inspirations for Gracetree's existence. I include these words here:

*O Lord,  
Fire and Spirit were in the water that cradled you  
In her who bore You,  
Fire and Spire in the water that baptised You.  
You hide Your radiance in human body,  
In ordinary clothes our feeble human nature.  
So now bread hides the fire  
Of your passion that resides in it,  
And wine veils the Spirit of Life that heals our souls.  
Lord-accept the gift of our lives today,  
For our love is faithful  
And we are full of awe and gratitude.  
Amen*