

Brunswick UC Pastoral Care 2020

Hospitality, Compassion & Community @ BUC

In 2014, BUC developed a fresh shape for offering pastoral care to one another. We desired to offer care in meaningful ways that reflected in the saving work of the Good Shepherd:

- extending Jesus Christ's hospitality,
- living out his compassion
- and building up his community.

At that time, we developed a structure of care that created both a shape for our caring and an accountability to one another. The principles of our caring are:

- **Hospitality** – pastoral care that welcomes people into community,
- **Compassion** – the care of people in times of challenge,
- **Community** – sustaining and building Christian community where we can each fully live out who we are.

Our various Pastoral Care teams have overseen these areas for the whole community.

See our vision document here:

<http://brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PC-Review-Report-2014-07.pdf>



Now after 5 years, and in the midst of the challenges of COVID19, we would like to take the opportunity to return to the fundamental questions and framework of our Pastoral Care and ask:

- ***Why is caring so important to us as a faith community?***
- ***What do we think we are doing when we care?***
- ***How do our structures inspire or inhibit us as a caring community?***

Here are some ideas to prompt our thinking:



Some theologians define Pastoral Care as: healing, guiding, sustaining, reconciling, nurturing, empowering, advocating.

Can you think of other words that might help us describe what we do when we care?



Caring is primarily about listening – listening with all our senses. It means that we attend to who is before us and the questions they are pondering, before we turn to our own responses.

What has been your experience of people listening?

Caring relies upon the perception of a need and some sort of bond between the person exhibiting the need and the potential carer

What needs are involved? In the carer? – and in the one being offered care? How do we develop a bond?



“Caring is aimed at improving the human-ness both of those who are cared for and those who are caring.”

Graeme Griffin

Caring confronts us with the reality that our individual humanity is tied up with the humanity of other people. When I care for another, I recognise that they need me to advance their human-ness, and that I need them to advance my own. Indeed, so mutual is the act of caring, one could claim that when it does not take place, each of those whom might have been involved is diminished.

The pastoral conversation shifts our conversation to a focus of our ‘being before God’.

We move to a place of reflecting upon ourselves in relation to God. The conversation moves to questions of meaning, creating space for reflection.

The task of theological reflection is where we come to ponder the things of meaning – where my story discovers resonance in the God story.

Do you find yourself trusting some people to have more meaningful conversations?

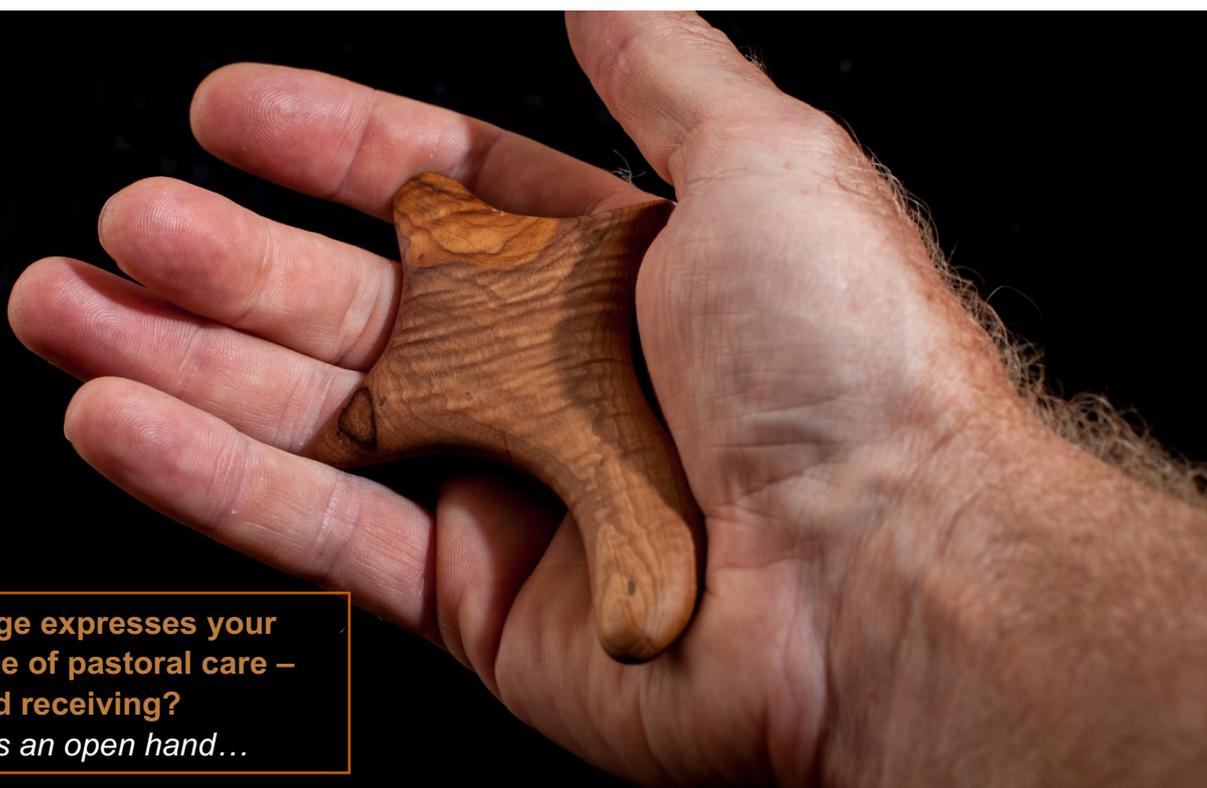
Pastoral Care rests upon the integration of theological understandings and the life and practice of being a whole human being.

Is this making sense of life?

What makes care “Pastoral”?

caring in the name of the incarnate God, a God embodied in a particular person, at a particular time and in a particular place... God with skin on!

- ***Being Present*** – *is more important than what we do.*
- ***Being silent*** – *listening is more important than what we say.*
- ***Being open to respond*** – *engaging in conversation is more important than our own agenda*



What image expresses your experience of pastoral care – giving and receiving?
For me it is an open hand...