

## > Farewell Dave

On **Sunday 1st May** Dave Hall concluded three years of ministry as our Children, Youth & Young Adult Pastor and 25 years in various roles with the Uniting Church including coordinating the National Christian Youth Convention and as chaplain at Penleigh and Essendon Grammar. Dave's ministry with Brunswick Uniting Church was significantly impacted on and shaped by the pandemic. During the speeches after worship the words offered by our young people and others gave voice to Dave's extraordinary creativity and commitment to pastoral care as he innovated to form new ways of engaging and supporting them through the long lockdowns and time spent apart.

### The last Children's Time



Dave and Ian gathered the children in a boat to listen to the gospel story - John 21:1-14. In response to this story of Jesus appearing to the disciples, inviting them to catch fish and then sharing a meal on the beach Dave shared one of his all time favourite stories about [St. Brendan and his voyage](#), in a boat, sailing off the edge of the known world!

### Between two meals



Dave offered the reflection '[Between two meals](#)' for his final service focussing our attention on Jesus encounter with the disciples on the beach, an epilogue to the Gospel of John. Dave spoke of the inspiration he discovered in the story of St. Brendan. He commented that *'The greatest moments in my life, the times I've felt closest to God, have undoubtedly been when I've set sail, taken a risk.'* Dave affirmed that *'Taking risks for Jesus is not straightforward.'* And he concluded wondering *'could this glorious epilogue in John's Gospel provide a glimpse of the*

*church's call – to live between these two meals – the last supper in the upper room, and the eucharistic breakfast on the beach? ... To notice Jesus beckoning us over, to sit on the beach and have a meal of fish and bread around the fire. Food for the journey.'*



### Conclusion of Placement



Bruce Missen, Chair of the Presbytery Pastoral Care Relations committee, joined us for worship to offer the [Conclusion of Placement Liturgy](#). This liturgy affirmed Dave's commissioning on 5th May 2019 and marked the conclusion of his ministry with us. Dave laid down the tasks of his ministry and offered the symbols representing his work - the Bible (handed to Joel Hallinan representing the whole of his ministry), a Cross



made by one his Aboriginal aunts (handed into the care of Kenna Morrison for the Student House), his tripod (reminding us of his many online children's times, brought symbolically but not handed on), Werewolves (played often at YUCY, Dave commented that he would have been in a lot of trouble without it - handed to Matilda McClintock who will be co-leading YUCY with Bridie Turner) and Tim Tams (handed into the care of Lucas, the reigning Tim Tam champion for 2021).





Bruce released Dave from his ministry relationships with Ian and Peter. He prayed *'O God, be with those who leave, and with those who stay; and grant that all of us, by drawing nearer to you, may always be close to each other in the communion of saints; through Jesus Christ our lover and brother. Amen.'* Dave knelt in the boat with the children and we sang 'For you deep stillness'.

## Speeches

Joel Hallinan, Chair of the Children, Youth & Young Adult committee gathered us in the hall to offer thanks and farewell to Dave. You can listen to [an audio-recording here](#) which begins at Clara's speech. *Note - a few corrections have been made in editing.*

**From Susannah Denholm** - These are the things I'll always remember about Dave:

- He is welcoming: When we joined BUC two years ago, he was kind to me and my family.
- He is fun: In Junior Youth Group and SMP we've played lots of games like Werewolves, Giant Jenga and bit of Badminton

- He is a creative teacher: Dave always did teaching with objects like Lego to make things interesting and engaging. Thanks Dave. We will miss you.



**From Clementine (and Harriet) Loynd** - When I first came to Brunswick Uniting Church in 2019, I was really happy to see that there were other kids here. Before that we went to a little church in Canberra, but Harriet and I were the only children. That was ok I suppose because the other people there made a big fuss of us and that was nice. But I have made some good friends at BUC.

When we first came, the Sunday Morning Program leader was Janet. And she was really good. She was amazing with kids and made Sundays lots of fun and helped me settle in. I was a bit sad when I found out that she was no longer going to look after the kid's program.

But when Dave came along, I was really happy. It was a bit of a surprise because I knew Dave already, before he came here. He is friends with my mum and dad, and we go camping once a year with him and his family and lots of other friends. And he goes for Carlton too which is very important for Dad.

Dave is really good with all the kids. He made Sunday Morning Program enjoyable for both young kids and older kids. He is a lot of fun and has great ideas – like Lego for the younger kids and

donuts for the older kids. He talks to us in a way that help us kids understand stories from the bible and the church while still keeping it fun.

When COVID happened, we couldn't go to church anymore. But Dave would host zoom meetings for the kids and would do fun drawing challenges, Kahoot and Tim Tam challenges that everyone loved. And we really liked watching his little interviews and chats with Clara online. They were sometimes very funny and made me smile. Doing zoom meetings kept me in touch with the other kids from the church. And he also sent us an activity pack in the mail which was full of craft stuff and a beautiful letter.

I am really going to miss him here at BUC. So is Harriet and all the kids. My mum told me that he is going to be a kind of carpenter. I think that is what Jesus did for a job too. That makes sense. I wish him the best of luck with his new job and hope that he is very happy with his work.

Goodbye Dave. We will miss you!



**From Clara Hall** - When Dad first started his role as the Children, Youth & Young Adults leader I never imagined it ending up like it did. Every Thursday after I finished online learning Dad and I would venture off into the unknown to film a Children's Time and boy we ended up in some weird places - on the roof, in a tree, up a ladder. But my all times favourite Children's Time was when we filmed Hard Quiz. It was the most fun one in my opinion. With Patrick's humour and Dad's amazing script writing ability it all fell into place. Dad has an amazing way with words

and can make any boring activity into the most entertaining activity. He comes up with games and hilarious lines.

I'm so happy to see him stepping out of his comfort zone and into the next chapter of his life. Thanks for everything Dad. You will be well missed.



**From Lucas** - G'day. I'm Lucas. I go to Fairfield Uniting Church/ St. Andrew's. I've got a few things to say. First thing Dave thank you for making Friday's so enjoyable and something to look forward to. You always make sure that everyone has a good time and nobody is left out. You always make sure that everything is prepared in advance so that it can be the most fun and enjoyable time that we can have. I remember the first time I attended youth group. I had a great time and I felt very

welcome. And I was keen to come back. It was all thanks to you Dave for organizing all the events. You are the only one that makes sure all of these events happen. So on behalf of the St. Andrew's crew I'd like to say thank you for everything that you've done with and for us.



**From Oliver Sun** - Our student house is many things, but above all else, it is a first and foremost a community. When Dave first stepped into his role, what he inherited – at least, according to the tales the student house retirees told us on their rocking chairs – was a house that had not quite reached that ideal. Emphasis upon not quite, because what we of the current student house eventually came to inhabit was indeed a community – one as loving and warm as anyone could ask for. He put in the work to bring the student house where it is today; the blood, sweat and tears far beyond what the role initially asked of him, forging bonds under his care that will last long beyond the few years we each spend at the student house.

Through thick and thin, pandemics and broken walls, misunderstandings and communication breakdowns, Dave has always remained with the kindness, patience, and endurance that his role requires to pull the student house through. A garden cannot flourish without the strong, guiding hand of a gardener; the student house would not be so flourishing a garden today without Dave's guidance. Whoever follows in your wake will have some very large shoes to fill. I was thinking of whether or not to say that last sentence in because I didn't want to stress out your successor but it's the truth.



**From Matilda McClintock** - For those of us living in the student house, Dave has been a constant in our lives over the past few years. His pastoral care strategies are diverse: airport runs and organising gardening bees, phone calls and check ins, Feasting Tables and supply runs during covid outbreaks, theological discussions over a cuppa, and, of course, a healthy stream of pizza, icecream, Tim-tams and Markan sandwiches.

years. An enjoyable person to chat theology with. A pretty great bloke all round.

I know for myself personally, Dave has had a massive impact on my life over the past year and a half. He was the first person I met from BUC and I've had a fair bit to do with him since then. From helping out with YUCY to junior youth group and SMP, it's been an honour to work with you Dave. And it's also an honour for Bridie and I to take over from you in terms of YUCY and as Oliver has said 'we have big shoes to fill'.

As many of you know, Dave is reliable. He's approachable - always up for a chat, and a master of creating safe spaces for people to open up. He's honest. He's down-to-earth and always has a good story up his sleeve. He meets people where they're at, non-judgmentally, and helps as much as he can.



In preparing this speech, I talked to the members of Olive House about what they appreciated about Dave. The responses came as no surprise: A father figure. Someone to talk through difficult issues with. A rock during the unpredictability of the last few

So Dave, on behalf of Olive House, I'd just like to say a massive thank you for all the time, effort, and genuine care you've invested in the student house community throughout your time in this role. We're going to miss you, but we wish you all the best. May God walk with you in this next part of your journey, and bless you on your path.

Thank you for everything you've given to this community.

**From Joel Hallinan** - On behalf of the Children, Youth & Young Adult Committee it's been a real pleasure working with you Dave. I came on to the committee knowing nothing about church for children, young adults or anything like that and I've learnt a lot. From Gina, Catherine and Anita who is here and Claire are previous members we thank you very much.

hasn't arrived yet but when it gets here will be just lovely I'm sure.

We have a couple of small gifts if you'd like to come forward. We've heard a lot about St. Brendan today and if you'd be kind enough to open that up you will see a piece of paper with a picture of a St. Brendan's Cross which is on it's way from Portland Oregon but due to international supply chain issues



Now that's a wood working plane, the name of which escapes me because I'm not a wood worker like Dave so you might be able to explain it to us. This has been in my family for as long as Poppy has been alive and he's 100 this year so there's a lot of work that has been put into it and a lot more work that could be done. It was in a fairly rough state but someone helped me put it back into a good state. I don't know if it's useful but it might be symbolic to put in the shed.



Before being cleaned up

Thank you Dave for everything you've given us.

**From Ian Ferguson** - Friends I just want to say a brief couple of words. Dave and I have shared a lot over the last few weeks. Dave knows how deeply I've appreciated working with him as part of the Ministry Team together. A lot goes on behind the scenes in a church like this and particularly in this church and I don't know how many people are aware of the closeness of the working relationship between the different ministers in our team. Dave and I speak every Tuesday about what we're doing, what we're planning for worship on Sunday. The Ministry Team, the three of us meet every fortnight. We work very closely together. And for the whole time of my ministry, working with the ministry team in all its manifestations has been one of the highlights of ministry and that has certainly continued to be the case in working with Dave so thank you Dave for all that we've shared together.

Something else that goes on behind the scenes of course is lots of committee meetings. You've heard about a couple of those committees - the Children & Youth Committee, the Student House Committee. Dave has also, he didn't have to, he just came along voluntarily to every worship committee meeting as

well because as you've all witnessed Dave contributes significantly to the worship that we share every Sunday morning. So Dave, on behalf of the worship committee, I'd like to thank you for your contribution to our life and to our meetings and to our Sunday mornings. This card and this Bunnings voucher is from the worship committee so thank you.



**From the worship committee**

(a few of the notes in the card)

Dave, I've noticed the respectful concern you show for the kids in children's time. You make sure the younger ones know what is going on. With the older kids who want to express an opinion you are always careful to make sure they feel able to contribute in their own words. Jim

Dear Dave, Thank you for all you've done for BUC while you've been our CYYA Pastor, and particularly for being part of Worship Committee. Thank you for keeping young people's involvement as a cornerstone in our worship life, both when we have been able to worship together in person, and particularly for so much of that time in COVID isolation. We are so grateful that you have been such a central part of our common life. Blessings on the next adventure! Natalie

Dear Dave, Thank you for the thoughtfulness and creative energy you have shared with Worship Committee. I appreciated your ability to form a sense of community through shared projects and activities that allowed us to explore God and the message of Jesus together. Best wishes, Amelia

**From James Balsillie** (by text message) - Dave has been amazing in his role as Student House Pastor, fostering an incredible community across the two houses through Feasting Table nights, Student House Dinners and Student Housing Committee nights over and above pastoral care and support to all the students, the committee just to name a few.

James wants to thank Dave for the significant impact he's had in this role and for being a rock on which the committee and students could build such a vibrant committee. I look forward to seeing what Dave creates with his wood working talents.

**Concluding from Joel** - For final things, over there on the table there's a book if you would like to write a message to Dave this is an opportunity but also we'll pass it around to various committees for the next couple of weeks before we pass it to Dave.

A big thank you to Amelia, Sheila and everyone else for doing the morning tea and next to me is the most amazing gingerbread creation I've ever seen. It's a recreation of the fire pit at Dave's house that he built complete with flames, the Holy Spirit and more gingerbread people to be eaten.

The other thing I wanted to say is for the next period we have some wonderful people doing our children and youth work:

- Matilda McClintock and Bridie Turner will lead YUCY
- Dave Miller will be helping with Student House
- Steph Gesling for the Sunday Morning Program

Talk to those people about the programs, join in, volunteer, help out where you can.





**From Dave** - I'm going to have another go speaking into a microphone, hopefully it goes a bit better than the reflection. Thanks everyone for coming today. There's a few special guests. My Mum & Dad are here which is lovely. Dad was the minister at South West Brunswick for a little while. It's fantastic to see Caitlin, BUC pageant director, writer extraordinaire, all the way from Geelong. Thanks a lot Bruce. It's really nice to have you bookend this with the long connection I've had with your family. Thanks to the various contributors, it was lovely to hear your thoughts, thanks a lot for thinking about what you wanted to say. While I'm on thank yous -

- to Joel and the CYYA team, it's a small team but a pretty great one so Gina and Catherine and Anita before that. I think Anita might have been the first person that I spoke to about this role. ...
- James Balsillie and the Student House committee, also another great bunch of people and I think that's one of my proudest legacies, leaving the Student House in a really good shape, they're great kids, the support they have around them, they're pretty well connected to this place.
- To the Church Council, Maxine, Jess and the team on the Church Council, we've had some long meetings but it's been good to go the journey
- To the worship committee with Saide, Ian, Natalie ..., it's been a good part of the journey.

I thought I might just finish with one story and it's to do with microphones. As you might know I've got a bit of a love-hate relationship with microphones. Invariably something goes wrong - I drop it at church, the batteries don't work. I didn't always love microphones and in the early days I was quite scared of them but the church, I've been working for the church for 25 years, they gave me a microphone when I was too young to know what to do with it. I've struggled with microphones and being able to find my voice. One particular time, I think it's worth sharing ... when I was way too young, I was asked by Pam Kerr to be her chaplain when she was Moderator. One of the jobs as a chaplain at the big Synod meeting is to say a prayer at the start of each day. And I'd had a pretty big day the day before and I was due to say the prayer the next day. It was the 19th of September 1999 and that was the day that I was supposed to say the prayer. And the day before that was one of the greatest days in history - Bracksy knocks off Kennett, Carlton knocks off Essendon in the prelim final. And Dave Miller and I had a fairly big night with a lot of new friends. I was supposed to say the prayer in front of 400 people there to start the next day. I had no voice ... I was like 'I'm in a world of trouble here, what am I going to do?' So I just got up there and I said (hoarse voice) 'Let's have a few minutes of silent prayer. Amen'. And I sat down and I thought 'That's all that needs to be said. So on that note I think I'll put the microphone down.'



**From Dave** (on Facebook) - Hi folks, Thanks for all of the kindness during my farewell service this morning. I've just been sitting on the couch recovering, and going over things. I said to Fran: "Did I thank Ian?" And she said: Nope...

Can't quite believe I forgot to thank Ian (very little sleep last night...)

So, not quite the same in writing, but here's what I was going to say:

"Two of the best people I've worked with over the years have both been Ian's - Ian Swain in Philadelphia and Ian Ferguson.

I have deep admiration for him as a minister and a person. I will miss our Tuesday lunchtime conversations reflecting on the previous weekend, pastoral issues and some theological and creative planning for the weekend ahead. He has such great clarity about what is really going on with biblical passages, and how best to explore it at BUC. Ian has been a towering support

to me during these three pretty turbulent years of ministry - I'm forever grateful to have been in a team with him."

Special thanks to Joel H for the historic hand planer, and to Amelia for the fire-pit inspired ginger bread cake. Can't wait to see the St Brendan's cross when it arrives from over the far-off seas. Hopefully it doesn't take 7 years, like Brendan's voyage.



compiled by **Saide Cameron**