

We've heard it stated a lot recently, that we are in interesting times.

One of the interesting times is the development and use of online communication, meetings, and connection. Fb, you tube, messenger and even ZOOM (for this who are not familiar with Zoom, it is a media program that allows multiple users to meet together via video conferencing in real time.

One of the things I have noticed is that occasionally, when someone is on zoom, there is some background noise – bird, traffic, dog barking or even another conversation. At times an unseen person enters the room and talks with the person on the screen talking to you. But you can't see that person but you know they are there or you can hear them. An unseen presence!

In the music industry, there is a term called uncredited background singers. It's an acknowledgement that there are others who have contributed to the record in some way, but not named so they don't take attention away from the lead artist. Sometimes the extra singer might be the maker of coffee who simply happened to be in the studio at the time and are softly whispering the backing vocals and even supporting the artist.

We can surely recognize a parallel here. Jesus tells his followers that the role of the Holy Spirit is, in effect, to whisper the lyrics of the ***gospel song*** into the ears of the faithful or to be the supporting backing artist. When Jesus was present, he was the one who instilled in the disciples the right words, coached them through the proper verses, and taught them the commandments.

But now, in John's Gospel, as Jesus approaches his death, the disciples will be without him, and that task is to be handed over to the Holy Spirit: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth ..." (John 14:15-17).

The primary task, then, of the Holy Spirit is reminding the faithful of the truth, jogging the memories of the followers of Jesus about his commandments so that they can keep them in love, whispering the lyrics of

the never-ending hymn of faithful obedience in their ears.

The Holy Spirit, as quiet, whispering teacher is reminding the people of God about everything that Jesus taught and commanded. This is whispering the gospel lyrics into the ears of the faithful, into our lives, our hearts and our minds.

In an ever rapidly changing, chaotic, sick, challenged world, we are, as the basis of Union of the Uniting Church says, a pilgrim people, always on the way, always moving forward with the guidance of God's Spirit. We are always on the go, on the way and following the one who is the way.

We are not who we were or like we were 2, 5, 10, even 50 years ago. Never before have we been at **this** point in time. Yesterday was yesterday and today is today, and tomorrow, well who knows? But you know, as the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews says Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow!

Sometimes change is brought upon us dramatically and sometimes it is gentle and over a period of time. The disciples, as we hear in the gospel reading, would face a dramatic change in their lives. Soon they would be without their beloved Jesus. We are in dramatic times – all across the planet

But Jesus calms their concern with a gentle word of encouragement, and the promise of his continuing presence. In a way he was asking them to dream the dream, to ***feel*** his presence in their lives, individually and communally. Jesus was encouraging them to recognise his presence, and to **listen** to his whisper in life, the message of the lyrics of the gospel.

What do we hear? What whisper? What is God calling, asking or seeking of us as the people of God, the body of Christ, the Church at Morialta? What are you hearing or feeling or sensing as we progress through Covid-19 and the lifting of restrictions?

Just this week, during a ZOOM gathering we ministers were challenged by someone who reminded us that the church should always and primarily be working

towards the margins, to the hurting to the needy, not to exploit, but take the Gospel to.

To dream dreams and to have visions, in a theological sense, is to see, and to hear, and to feel and to discern what God is doing or about to do in our midst.

Historically, much of the church's mission and witness has come about by a dream or inspiration or a vision of what could be.

We may not be so sure of what God is saying right now, but I do believe God is speaking. Some people may feel an urge or a quiet nudge, for others it may be a passion or a fire in the belly, while others simply see a need. Sometimes opportunities simply present themselves. What do they say? Noting like a good crisis to present opportunities

Maybe we are being asked to simply walk among our community, and look with open eyes, and ask God to reveal to us some place or some people to whom we can engage and share the good news of the gospel, to look around and simply see the needs right on our doorstep.

Some of those dreams or whispers will require \$, others time, and maybe our own personal and communal investment.

I believe we are, as a church, in a time where God is whispering in our ear. The spirit is whispering the very lyrics of God into our community.

God is calling us to dream, to discern, seeking guidance on what is of God. Discernment occurs among the body as people pray, listen and question. Sometimes discernment is quick and at other times it takes longer and sometimes it's not altogether clear. It is then, that patience is required, for God's timing is always God's timing.

If we feel we have a dream or vision or idea, then I encourage us to pray on it, seek others thoughts and test it. Bring it before the leadership of the church or Church Council. Email it, write a letter Zoom it

God just might be whispering into your ear, for the rest of the body to hear.

We are in exciting times. Times of change. Times of opportunity. But let us never forget that we live by faith, and we live by the Spirits guidance. Our vision, our dream is first and foremost God's vision, and we need to be still to hear that, to have a humble and receptive heart.

I believe the church is, and always should be, on about people, serving, leading, and ministering. The church is and should be on about listening to the whisper of the gospel lyrics.

And so, we live by faith, listening, praying and watching

The Gospel lyrics sing into the community of faith, to those with ears to listen and those with humble hearts and those with eyes to see,

Scripture reminds us that it is not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord.

May our prayer be like that of Samuel of the OT who, having heard the whispering voice of God, said, speak Lord, your servant is listening. Here I am Lord!