



## Sapphire Coast Uniting Church 'Lockdown' Newsletter

Week Ending Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June

**Welcome** to another of our weekly emails, keeping our congregations connected during the Corona Virus shutdown. Feedback, contributions and any items for future inclusion are welcome, and can be forwarded to Jeff, Tony or via the church email.

### Birthdays next week:

22<sup>nd</sup> - Janet Smith

22<sup>nd</sup> – Uniting Church in Australia!



**Morning Tea:** Feel free to join some of the regulars for our virtual morning tea again this week. For those who have internet access and would like to join us at 11:00am each Sunday, just log onto zoom.us and click on 'Join a Meeting'. When prompted, enter the **Meeting ID: 961-8350-2388**. Due to new security measures you will be asked to enter a **Password: 705601** Alternatively, just click this link:

<https://uca-nswact.zoom.us/j/96183502388?pwd=d2l4MDhJQnZqeEh5cVU5NyttUi9lUT09>

Be sure to have your computer/laptop/ipad camera and audio turned on. (If you need some assistance, call Jeff or John beforehand). So, grab a cuppa and a biscuit and join us – no agenda, just a social catch up with whoever who can make it on the day.

### Church News

- Last Sunday a number of us were able to join together online, for a Zoom Church Service led by Peter Poole from the Batemans Bay congregational. Several of our members took readings or led prayers and many commented how wonderful it was to be having a service together again. Thank you for taking this on Peter. This week we will just be back to our morning tea chat together.
- Work on the manse is progressing well, to give it a fresh look before the arrival of our new minister. A big thank you to Royce, John and Jeanette who have been working tirelessly removing old floorcoverings, taking loads of rubbish to the tip, and carrying out a range of maintenance jobs. The painters have commenced preparation work and we expect the internal and external painting to be completed during July. Unfortunately waterproofing, re-tiling and replacement of the shower screen is also required in the bathroom, adding an unexpected expense.
- What will church look like when we restart? When our face to face services do resume, things will be quite different initially. In order to meet the health procedures and guidelines, the way we do things will have to change. We cannot just pick up where we left off! Initially at least:
  - the number of people in the Merimbula church will be limited to 30 – we will be required to keep physical distancing regulations in place (1.5 metres)
  - anyone feeling unwell will not be allowed to attend - those who are vulnerable and high risk in our communities should be aware of the risks of physical gathering
  - no singing of hymns together

- no passing of the peace with physical contact
- no hand holding/shaking (eg 'Now Unto Him')
- no morning tea afterwards

At this stage, we are hoping to be able to meet together, beginning sometime in July, and that these restrictions will gradually be eased over time.

- The latest edition of *Insights* has arrived. You may collect a copy from the office desk in the church, or ask your Elder for a copy. The magazine includes an article by Rev. Jean Shannon – *Church with No Walls: Chaplaincy in the Pandemic*.
- To ensure the office in the manse is adequately equipped, we have a need for one or two extra bookshelves. If anyone has a bookshelf they no longer need, please contact John or Royce and we can arrange pickup.

### Elders

Thank you to our Elders, who continue to be the main point of contact for our congregation. While most of the congregation have been able to receive our weekly newsletters by email, there are a number who do not have internet access, and rely on others to keep them informed. Similarly, while a group of the congregation have been able to keep in touch with weekly Zoom video 'Morning Tea' calls, many are not in this situation. Please continue to be mindful of those who may be missing out on these contacts. A weekly Elder's call, or simply dropping in a copy of the newsletter, can make a big difference.

### Op Shop

A small team of volunteers this week packed 51 more bags (or 765 kgs) of clothing to be dispatched to Africa, and have now cleared the backlog of surplus stock that had accumulated in our store shed. The Op Shop remains closed, while we work through the difficulties of reopening under the social spacing guidelines and in a way that doesn't place our volunteers at risk. We'll keep you posted!



### Your Weekly Offerings

Thank you to those who have been posting or forwarding their regular offerings, and to those who have directed payments to our church account (BSB 634 634, Account Number 100038811). Many have continued their *Giving Direct* contributions. If you are unable to do this, you may continue to put your weekly offerings aside in an envelope, that then can be placed in the collection when normal activities eventually resume.

### Lectionary readings this week:

Genesis 2:8-21  
 Psalm 86:1-10 (11-15), 16-18  
 Romans 6:1b-11  
 Matthew 10:24-39

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, all who would know the Christ.  
 Come and worship the one who offers true life.  
 Come and experience the unfailing love of God.  
 Come, and let the Spirit bring the truth to our living.  
 Come, let us worship.

### **PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Holy God, who knows us by name, who restores the troubled soul and keeps us firm in faith, help us to be fully aware of your presence here with us now. Grant us a clear vision of all we are called to be. In the name of Christ. Amen.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Merciful God,  
we confess that it is not always easy to stay the course.  
We sometimes find the ridicule  
and abuse of others hard to bear.  
Too often we feel undermined by the ways of the world or the temptation to remain silent in the face of injustice.  
Gracious God, we know that you love us and care for us but sometimes we feel estranged  
and isolated from your Spirit amidst the clamour of our community.  
We turn to you, longing to be filled with your love, your goodness and grace;  
longing to hear your voice and know your will.  
Forgive our timidity and fear and help us to remain true.  
In the name of Christ. Amen.

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Sisters and brothers,  
God seeks us and loves us unconditionally.  
We can trust the words of Christ and live in the power of his Spirit.  
I declare that our sins are forgiven.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING**

Gracious God, we come with our prayers of adoration, praise and thanksgiving.  
**For the wonder of creation and all its beauty, we adore you.**  
**For your love that never leaves us alone, we offer our praise.**  
**For your goodness in sustaining our lives by the gifts of your Spirit, we give thanks.**  
**Though you are beyond our imagining, able to hold the entire universe in your embrace,**  
**we know that you are intimately present in our lives.**  
You are truly the centre of our being, and so we worship you, now and forever. Amen.

### **DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT**

Jesus never minced words. He understood that those who see life differently are always likely to be shunned and even abused. Why did he feel the need to warn his followers? What was his offence that would spill over into their persecution? As we read the full account of his teachings, we might observe a few matters that riled some in his audience. Perhaps first and greatest of all was his willingness to include people that the consensus wanted to shun – prostitutes, tax collectors; enemies of the Jewish religious state like Samaritans, Romans and other gentiles. He managed to turn the accepted order of things upside down. Furthermore, he cared more for the values of the law than the letter of the law. How dare he pick corn on the Sabbath!? Then, again, he was acclaimed as Messiah and Lord – but so unconventionally. His way, the way of the Kingdom almost always confronts the status quo, especially where greed is concerned. Thank God that grace and love are sufficient to sustain us when we find ourselves implicated in his persecution.

### **OFFERTORY SENTENCE**

Loving Lord, as your disciples, we are pleased to share in your mission through our offering.

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

God of all goodness, receive the gifts that we bring for the sake of your mission.  
May they bring justice, restore hope and share your love. Amen.

### **HYMN**

Stand up, Stand Up for Jesus  
<https://youtu.be/TbnhUlj2PZ4>

### **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**

God our creator and salvation, in humility we bring the concerns of our hearts, seeking your blessing and healing wherever it is needed.

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Where the cries of the poor go unheeded and life is lived precariously:

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Where people live in despair because of war, violence, hopelessness and abuse:

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Where, this day, disease overwhelms, death is drawing near, or depression confounds:

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Wherever fear prevents us from living out the fullness of the Good News:

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Where peace, whether physical or emotional or relational, seems an impossible dream:

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Where the earth is threatened because of human stupidity and lack of care:

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, we believe that in Christ healing is ever possible; hope can be restored; that justice can be achieved and life enriched.

So we pray that our hearts and the hearts of all may be turned to you and experience your salvation,

**O Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.**

#### **COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

Though the world be against us, we need not fear, for Christ is our strength, God's loving embrace will hold us firm

and the power of the Spirit will always equip us.

So let us go to love generously and serve courageously.

And may God's love fill us; Christ's truth be upon our lips; and the Holy Spirit be our guide, this day, and forever more.

#### **Contact Details**

Church email: [merimbulaunitingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:merimbulaunitingchurch@gmail.com)

Church Council Chairman Colin: 64950961

Church website: [www.merimbulaunitingchurch.com.au](http://www.merimbulaunitingchurch.com.au)

Wyndham Congregation: Nancy Grant – 64942127

*Sapphire Coast Uniting Church acknowledges the First Peoples of the land on which our congregations meet, work, play and live. We honour them for their continuing custodianship from time beyond remembering. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.*

Missed a newsletter? They can be viewed on the Merimbula church website by clicking on the link on the front page, or going through to 'Notices and News' and clicking on 'Lockdown Newsletters'.

Keep safe,

Ed.

*Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive these emails*

