



Sapphire Coast Uniting Church 'Lockdown' Newsletter

Week Ending Sunday 28th June

Welcome to the 14th edition of our weekly emails, keeping our congregation connected during the Corona Virus shutdown. This is possibly the final edition as we are planning to restart church services next week. (see below)

Church News

Commencement of Church Services

It is planned to restart Church Services on **Sunday 5th July at 10:00am**. Things will be quite different initially. 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

Church Op Shop

The Op Shop will reopen on a trial basis on Monday afternoon the 6th July. **It will only operate on Monday and Friday afternoons** during the trial period. Any changes to the timetable will be dependent on how things go during this period.

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 Tony 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.

Tip vouchers - if anyone has any vouchers that they are unlikely to use before they expire on 31 July, we could use them to help with disposal of old floorcoverings and other waste from the manse. Please contact Royce or John.

Car for Sale – the vehicle driven by Rev David is now surplus to our needs and is to be sold. If you know anyone in the market for an inexpensive second-hand SUV, let us know. The car is a 2013 model Hyundai ix35 2.0L Highlander CRDi Diesel Auto, currently registered till December and has travelled 338,000km. (Registration CPD48Z) Asking \$5990 ono

Congratulations



Congratulations to Jeff and Cathie on the safe arrival of their 8th grandchild, Georgia Maree, in Canberra, last Wednesday.

Lectionary readings this week:

28th June 2020

Genesis 22: 1-14

Romans 6: 12-23

Matthew 10: 40-42



Hospitality, the Heart of Discipleship

Our Bible Text for this morning is [Matthew 10: 40-42](#)

“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

These verses speak about Hospitality as receiving and welcoming the stranger. In today's gospel text, Jesus reminds us of a very profound privilege, and, along with that, a tremendous responsibility. He tells us that we represent and symbolize him before others. He tells us that the reverse is also true: namely, that others represent and symbolize him before us. Jesus assures us that he himself is present in our lives when we welcome others into our midst. He is also present when others do the same for us. Most of us probably don't find it too difficult to offer hospitality to our family and friends, but what about the stranger, the neighbour we meet across the back lane, the fellow worker who speaks a different language, the fellow student in a wheel chair? How often do we welcome these and similar people who have fallen through the cracks or who are labelled outcasts in our society? Do we give them the gift of Christ's presence? Or do we say to ourselves, they got their own

people who look out for them? Hospitality is risky business. An open heart and an open home or church is a target for unpleasant experiences but, it can also be the recipient of unexpected surprises.

Hospitality, however, is not only about going some places and quietly hoping that the receiver of our hospitality will see Christ in us. When you are going on a pastoral call, especially when it's a difficult situation, don't expect that you will always bring Christ to them. Rather, be assured that **Christ is already there**. Sometimes we do good to see Christ in the people that we want to reach out to.

Christ is God's hospitality toward us. God gives Himself fully to us in His Son Jesus Christ. In fact, He did not spare His own life to show us how much He wants us to be with him for all eternity. God doesn't only give Himself fully to us. He also fully receives us and accepts us as we are. In Christ we experience both sides of the coin of God's hospitality toward us.

Church growth experts say that healthy and growing congregations are generally friendly churches that offer hospitality to others. **They are churches that live by the principle that, *there are no strangers here, only friends whom we have not met.***

You may be thinking to yourself, "Ok, we're getting close to line here... It's one thing to invite people to church, but a totally different thing to invite strangers into our homes." It is hard for many of us. I'll be the first one to admit that. But, if God has taught me anything in my personal faith walk in recent weeks, it is that God shows His face in the most unexpected places. Indeed, God shows up and meets us with a cup of cold water in the midst of the chaos in our life. God speaks to us His eternal Word of hope in the poem of a child. God shows his face through a song that touch your soul and gives you the courage to go on. Jesus is present in the life of a little old lady offering an understanding smile to the teenager who is playing his music way too loud.

"To be faithful disciples, we need to push the boundaries of what we find comfortable and easy. It is hard for many of us, but with God's help it is not impossible. So, the next time you give or receive hospitality, remember to rejoice in the other person's presence; remember that it may very well make all the difference in the world to the person who receives your hospitality. And remember the reverse is also true; someone may be the very presence of Christ for you in an unexpected time and place. Remember that when you give and receive hospitality in the name of Christ, God Himself is present there. Let us remember that it takes a true disciple's heart to make our guests feel at home and let us also be assured that if they recognize the hospitality of God in us, it is because we have been a faithful representation of Jesus Christ to them.

Ferdinand Funk

addendum

At times hospitality is very much like the true story of *a woman who had invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the little girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," the mother said. **The little girl bowed her head and said, "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"***

Contact Details

Church email: merimbulaunitingchurch@gmail.com

Church Council Chairman Colin: 64950961

Church website: 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 and "keep your distance"

Ed.

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

