



Sapphire Coast Uniting Church 'Lockdown' Newsletter

Week Ending Sunday 26th April

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:

Rosemary Akesson – 1st May



Morning Tea

There is of course no church this Sunday, but that shouldn't stop us having morning tea together. Let's try a video conference call instead! For those who have internet access and would like to join us, we are going to try a 'virtual morning tea' at 11:00am on Sunday. Log onto zoom.us and click on 'Join a Meeting'. When prompted enter the Meeting ID: **583-115-6283**. Be sure to have your computer/laptop/ipad camera and audio turned on. (Might be useful to have a practice with Zoom beforehand. If you need some assistance, call Jeff). So, grab a cuppa and a biscuit and join us – no agenda, just a social catch up with whoever who can make it.

Church News

* Canadian update – Alf and Joan have returned safely to their home in Vulcan County, Alberta, despite a challenging time at the airport trying to convince authorities to allow them to leave as Canada is their prime country of residence. They have now completed the required isolation period, but have emerged into a cooler climate – it was -9C on Easter Sunday! Alf is hoping to be put on the list for elective surgery on his hip, although no joint surgeries are currently being done, due to the pressure on the health system.

* The skylight above the toilets in the church has been leaking for some time, and needs replacement. There are also several rusted sheets of roofing iron needing to be replaced, as does the guttering facing Lakeview Ave and Henwood St. Although it is an awkward time to be undertaking expenditure of this nature, the work is necessary to avoid further problems. We have accepted a quote from a local roofing company and will allocate \$3500 from our provisions for this work. It is hoped it will be completed in the next few weeks while the church buildings are unoccupied.

* Wyndham bushfire grant – The *Bushfire Response Task Group of Canberra Region Presbytery* has allocated financial relief to the Wyndham Church specifically to support the local community, valued at \$1,000, funded from Target Australia. We are currently in discussions between Wyndham Elders and Presbytery as to how these funds can be best utilised for the good of the community.

* Rev David has been on annual leave since Sunday 12th April and will resume duties on Saturday 16th May. During his time away from duties please direct any necessary calls to Church Council Chairman Colin on 64950961. David's placement concludes on 31st May. At this stage, the planned farewell service and brunch on that date is unlikely to go ahead. Discussions are still underway with Presbytery as to how best to manage a farewell, given the current circumstances.

* Top 20 – Below is a list of the 20 most-sung songs in Australian churches last year, according to Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI). How many do you recognise? Is it perhaps time to try something new?

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| 1. 10,000 Reasons | 11. Living Hope |
| 2. What a Beautiful Name | 12. Cornerstone |
| 3. Praise the Name (Anastasis) | 13. This I Believe (The Creed) |
| 4. Who You Say I Am | 14. Glorious Day |
| 5. In Christ Alone | 15. Great Are You Lord |
| 6. How Great is Our God | 16. Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone) |
| 7. This Is Amazing Grace | 17. Reckless Love |
| 8. Build My Life | 18. The Lion and the Lamb |
| 9. How Deep the Father's Love | 19. Good Good Father |
| 10. Raise a Hallelujah | 20. Come to the Alter |

From the Treasurer

Over the last few years our financial goal has been to 'balance the books', and thankfully we have been able to achieve this balance between income and expenditure. Over the lockdown period this is no longer the case, and we will be forced to draw on savings previously set aside to ensure full time ministry in the future. With both the Op Shop and Hall Rental income non-existent at the moment, we are more reliant than ever on offerings. Many thanks to those who use our Giving Direct program, to those who have elected to make direct bank deposits during this time and to those setting aside a weekly envelope until we meet again. *In response to the presence of God in our lives, let us give of our offering with grateful hearts.*

Lectionary readings this week: Easter 3 Year A

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalms 116:1-4, 12-19

1 Peter 1:17-23

Luke 24:13-35



CALL TO WORSHIP (from Words for Worship)

God is here – present in conversation; in questions and the sharing of hopes lost, in searching and in wondering.

Come and find God here.

God is here – present in the journey; in the company of friends and on the familiar road, in the untrodden path and in wandering.

Come and find God here.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Holy God of mystery and encounter, be with us on this journey that we may be aware of your presence. Open our minds to hear your great story through scripture.

Open our ears to listen to your voice and be attentive to your call. Open our eyes to see your work in the world.

Open our lives that our hearts may burn for you. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Jesus Christ, hear our confessions this day, we pray. When we become absorbed in our own concerns and forget to look for your presence, forgive us, Jesus Christ.

When we become fearful and prefer to walk a well-worn path rather than respond to your call upon our lives, forgive us, Jesus Christ.

When we see only confusion and questions and forget to see your ways of wisdom, forgive us, Jesus Christ.

Draw us back that we may seek you in scripture, in the breaking of bread, in the waters of baptism; in the gift of hospitality and in the midst of conversation; in the beauty of creation and in stillness of silence. Help us to recognise you in our midst, that are paths may be redirected in your ways.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God has never left God's people abandoned. God is with us on the journey and Christ is present with us on the way.

God gifts us through encounters at unexpected times and with unexpected people. So I declare to you:

We are forgiven, nurtured in freedom.

Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

Generous God,

your gifts to us are many and we are thankful. For the gift of understanding, we give thanks.

For the gift of friendship, wise counsel and company, we give thanks.

For the gift of hope, renewal, and second chances, we give thanks.

Holy God of Easter, you give new opportunities when we feel all hope is lost.

You give wisdom when we feel there is only confusion.

You grant us connection and relationship when we feel abandoned.

You grant us grace that is undeserved yet flows freely from your love.

Our hearts are warmed by your presence and our lives are changed forever.

With grateful hearts we offer our thanks and praise. Amen.

DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT

Wouldn't it be nice if there was the sacrament of a cup of coffee? Perhaps there should be. In the gentle conversation with a friend, God is made known. On the Road to Emmaus the disciples say to Jesus, "we had hoped..." and explain who they thought Jesus was going to be. That phrase carries such a heaviness of heart – what we had hoped for hasn't happened. This Messiah who they thought was going to reclaim power for the oppressed is dead and they have given up all hope. "We had hoped..." We know about that phrase today too. "We had hoped mum would get better." "We had hoped our marriage would work." "We had hoped life would bring different choices, we had hoped..." It is into these and many more situations that Jesus offers relationship and hopefulness. For the disciples, it is this that leads them to run back to Jerusalem with good news. And for us, it is in these moments when the mystery of the presence of God and the reality of relationship with God collides and grace flows freely.

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

In response to the presence of God in our lives,
let us give of our offering with grateful hearts.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of relationship, out of love for you, we bring our offering this day. Bless these offerings, that they and we may share your good news of great love with all people. Through Christ we pray, Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

God of the Emmaus journey,
we take this time to pray for the journey of life. For those just beginning new adventures

and those who are facing endings.
Be present in our midst, Jesus Christ.
There are many situations in our world
that need turning around through your grace.
We pray for those whose choices are damaging themselves, others and the world.
Help find new paths of grace that healing may be possible.
Be present in our midst, Jesus Christ.
In a world where loneliness leads to pain and depression, we pray for deeper relationships, wider
connections
and open communities where everyone finds a place to belong.
Be present in our midst, Jesus Christ.
For some life is a struggle and companionship of the journey is essential. We pray for those who are
rebuilding lives and communities
in the face of tragedy;
for those who are suffering and grieving;
for those recovering from abuse or bullying.
Be present in our midst, Jesus Christ.
Finally, Jesus Christ, we pray for our own journeys. May we
walk daily with you,
sharing our lives in conversation, learning and relationship.
Be present in our midst, Jesus Christ. Amen.



COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

God is with us on the journey, never leaving us abandoned, always surprising us with resurrection moments. Wherever our path may lead us, may God our creator be our source of love, may Jesus Christ, our companion, be our light, and may the Spirit, our friend and sustainer, be our guide, this day and forevermore. Amen.

HYMN

The head that once was crowned with thorns TIS 378

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+head+that+once+was+crowned+with+thorns&&view=detail&mid=A5FA11251A6F38758904A5FA11251A6F38758904>

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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