



Sapphire Coast Uniting Church 'Lockdown' Newsletter

Week Ending Sunday 3rd May

Welcome to the 6th edition of our weekly emails, keeping our congregation connected during the Corona Virus shutdown. As we won't be printing our regular pewslip, this will be part of our approach to keep our folk connected. Contributions and items for inclusion can be forwarded to Jeff or Tony.

Birthdays next week:



No birthdays this coming week

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.

Morning Tea

Our virtual morning tea was a success last week, with 13 people joining in for a chat. We have decided to make this a weekly event for the time being. 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**. 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.

Recently added Resources from Presbytery

Here is a collection of links that might be helpful in our current circumstances:

Darren Wright suggests an article that challenges us as church

<https://tammytolman.blogspot.com/2020/04/the-church-is-calibrated-for-world-that.html>

Elizabeth Raine has reflected on Anzac Day

<https://www.insights.uca.org.au/category/features/belief-matters/>

Here's an article from the UK with a provocative title, on the worship—service tension

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/24-april/comment/opinion/youtube-sermons-will-not-feed-the-hungry>

Graham Perry (Sydney Central Coast Presbytery) offers this longer and rather technical discussion of on “virtual communion”

<https://grahampez.wordpress.com/2020/04/22/holding-the-body-at-arms-length/>

Pilgrim Church in Adelaide has a collection of different “versions” of Psalm 23, which is set in the lectionary this coming Sunday

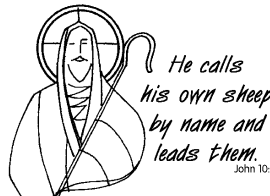
<https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/?p=874>

Lectionary readings this week:

Acts 2: 42-47

1 Peter 2: 19-25

John 10: 1-10



Fourth Sunday of Easter (May 3, 2020)

Today we experience **Jesus as the Good Shepherd**. He invites us to hear His voice so that we “might have life and have it in abundance.” St. Francis de Sales notes:

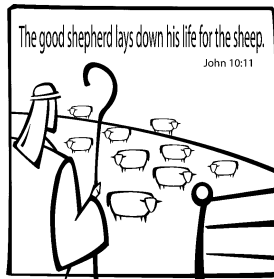
Our Good Shepherd gathers us all around Himself to keep us always under His protection. He tenderly nourishes us with His love. So loving is God’s hand as it handles our heart, bringing it strength without depriving us of freedom. Those who hear well His voice never lack holy inspirations in order to live life in abundance and to fulfill in a holy way their responsibilities.

To hear well we must listen. To hear the word of God, we must first be attentive to it by having an open heart. To listen to God’s word we must learn it well and carry out what we are taught. When manna fell from Heaven, the Hebrews rose each morning to collect it before sunrise. They ate and swallowed it so as to be nourished and strengthened. We too must digest well God’s word to make it part of our own being.

Thus, each day nourish yourself with a little spiritual reading that affirms God’s word and sends you on your way to your everlasting welfare. Let the word of God that you hear, speak to you throughout the day. Put that into practice and leave the rest to Our Saviour, who nurtures your true needs. If we are to have life in abundance eternally, we must hear the voice of Our Shepherd, who guides us if only we let Him.

Since we easily mismanage ourselves, Our Shepherd wants to teach us how to have life in abundance through loving His voice rather than the voice of strangers, who easily lead us astray. True love is when we live in light of Our Saviour’s love, rather than the selfish loves that the culture stresses. How happy we will be if we remain in the Shepherd’s presence, faithfully listening to and living His voice!

(Adapted from the Sermons of St. Francis de Sales, L. Fiorelli, Ed.)



Trust the Good Shepherd

Several years ago there was a television quiz show called "Who Do You Trust?" I seem to remember that it had to do with deciding whose answers to questions the contestant trusted most.

Trust, particularly for public figures and institutions - churches included - seems to be at a low point. Such mistrust seeps through to one and all. Facing such a situation, we draw the wagons closer and closer, turning more and more inward. Perhaps, we think, only my immediate family can be trusted. Maybe only I can be trusted. What a pinched and lonely world we are creating for ourselves.

Good Shepherd Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, reminds us that there is one who can be trusted in every situation - Jesus of Nazareth. Psalm 23, which is read and sung on this Sunday, describes the care of the shepherd. Quiet waters and green pastures are provided for the sheep - a virtual banquet of satisfaction.

The Gospel reading from John 10, however, takes a different approach. It describes the way that phony and treacherous bandits try to tear the flock away from its true shepherd. Jesus says, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit" (**John 10:1**).

In Jesus' time, sheep pens were walled enclosures where the sheep were kept overnight. When morning came, each shepherd would call for his or her own sheep to come out of the pen, then lead them to pasture. The sheep would follow the one voice they knew. But thieves showed up and yelled out for any of the flock to follow them - not to pasture - but to slaughter. What a scene of chaos it must have been. The true shepherd said the name of each sheep, one by one, while the thief tried to steal them.

These verses remind us to expect and recognize danger and deception. It only takes one sheep to create pandemonium: bolting after the wrong shepherd, trusting the wrong voice, following the wrong leader. Only one voice can be trusted.

Who do you trust? Where can you find life and find it more abundantly? Only one can be called the good shepherd: the one who lays down his life for the sheep. This is the criterion for trust. In this world of competing loyalties, there is one steady, unchanging, invincible word that comes to us and steadies us. It is a word of love - a broad and deep love that knows us by name.

This is the voice spoken over us at our baptism. This voice speaks of love and acceptance, just as we are. This voice calls us to trust in the one who is the centre of our life together, the one who broke the grip of death and now lives among us by his word and through his Spirit. Our faith points to the one who is the way, and the truth, and the life. We can trust him.

In Jesus, the fullness of God has come to dwell among us - crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. He is the one we can trust, the one who will not let us down. Jesus is the one to

whom we can turn in good times and in bad, the one who came to bring life and to bring it more abundantly.

In John 10:3-4 Jesus tells us, "The sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. . . because they know his voice." How are you listening for that voice in scripture? In prayer? In service? In worship? Be open to hearing it calling you to a new and deeper relationship with the one you can trust in all things.

John Cedarleaf,

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Pastoral Prayer (*Shirley McLennan*)

Welcome to our world.

Thank the Lord that we are part of it. It is slightly different to yesterday's world and no doubt it will be different to tomorrow's world. We are grateful that you have helped us to adapt

We appreciate the opportunity to take stock of how we feel, how we do things and improve our capacity to make things better.

Although we are having a forced retreat we are also reaping the benefits of the silence, the sounds of the birds, the peace.

We thank you for our community and the joy associated with Easter. We still celebrated in our own way and give thanks for our redemption

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit Amen

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

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

Keep your "distance" and keep safe
Ed.