

SURF COAST LINKED CONGREGATIONS
QUARTERLY NEWS BULLETIN
SUMMER EDITION 2013/2014

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MINISTER'S REPORT FOR SUMMER QUARTERLY BULLETIN
Advent/Christmas Message from Helen

This is the time of year when things really “hot up” for most of us. It’s the busiest and happiest time of the liturgical year. I really enjoy the fact that the Uniting Church embraces the Revised Common Lectionary, which takes us through all the important events in the life of Jesus throughout the 3 year cycle. Of course, we are into the season of Advent and Christmas right now.

To follow through the life of Jesus in all its details is really valuable, because it gives us the chance to meditate on all the aspects of his life in turn. Remembering that the goal of our life of faith is to grow to be more like Christ, this time for reflection is invaluable. There really isn’t a day goes past that it’s not worthwhile to spend a little time reflecting on our lives, in the light of the life of Christ. To make time for that, some other things are going to have to be set aside at times. It’s a matter of putting our spiritual growth at the top of the list, for our own sake, and the sake of those around us. I say “for the sake of those around us” because I know that if I get too far out of plumb spiritually, then I’m not good to be around. That probably happens to most of us, some of the time.

Take the time to ponder on the amazing gift of the birth of the Christ child. Whether or not you will be spending Christmas Day (or another day near to it) with a large gathering of family and friends, or even if we you are alone that day, it gives real pleasure to reflect on how extraordinarily giving God is. The gift of Christ to us is never taken away: remember- “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The gift of the Christ child was given in difficult circumstances, away from the couple’s home, and it was necessary for them all to flee to another country as refugees while he was an infant. He was born into a world of civil strife and oppression. The family had to flee the ruthless quest for power of the ruler of the day. We are all too aware of such situations facing families and ethnic groups in today’s world. Jesus came to announce that the Kingdom of God had come amongst human beings. He came to invite everybody to embrace that Kingdom. If we did, there would be abundant peace, harmony and equality in this world.

So this liturgical year, which has just begun with Advent, follow the story through the words and actions of Jesus. Drink them in, think about them, pray about them, puzzle over them, allow yourself to be awed by the significance of it all. Even more than that, have a wonderful, safe, happy Christmas and New Year.

Blessings from your Minister, Helen.

NEWS FOR OUR FOUR LINKED CONGREGATIONS

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SERVICES

CAROL SERVICES	SUNDAY 22 DEC	9.30 AM 11 AM	TORQUAY BELLBRAE
CHRISTMAS EVE	TUESDAY 24 DEC	6 PM 11 PM	TORQUAY BELLBRAE
CHRISTMAS DAY	WEDNESDAY 25 DEC	9 AM 9.30AM 10.30 AM	ANGLESEA TORQUAY AIREYS INLET
	SUNDAY 29 DEC	9 AM 9.30 AM 10.30 AM 11 AM	ANGLESEA TORQUAY AIREYS INLET BELLBRAE

FROM THE TREASURER, ROBIN DENNIS -

Can you help our ailing budget?

The congregations in the Surf Coast Uniting Church are THE church. In caring for one another, and for those in the wider community, they ARE the church in action.

For us to be effective we must fully support our marvellous minister. We must also maintain our buildings and pay for property services. Each year the church prepares a budget. This provides support for the wider Uniting Church (through Mission and Service), payment for our minister, and ancillary costs such as insurance, maintenance, telephone and printing.

To meet these expenses we budget for income from weekly offerings, property income and fund raising efforts. At its meeting on November 19, the Linking Council noted with concern that there was likely to be a shortfall of some \$8,000 by the end of the year. The shortfall is mainly due to weekly offerings being less than anticipated. If you are in a position to increase your weekly offering, it would be very much appreciated.

LATEST NEWS FROM SAMMY STAMP

Up to 30 October this year the sales of stamps had reached \$30,332.05. A grant of \$5,000 from Sammy funds was recently made to the SHARE/Uniting Church NSW Bushfire Appeal, thus bringing to \$29,200 in grants approved so far this year.

This is the time of year when we receive lots of mail with postage stamps, so please take that extra few seconds to carefully cut or tear the envelopes, leaving at least 1 cm (or half an inch) of envelope surrounding the stamp. These stamps can be placed in the collection box at your church, or given to Rev Helen, Margaret Ganly or Jean Murray. The stamps are then transported to the Synod Office, Melbourne for the Sammy Stamp team to

sort and then sell to stamp dealers. This team is now taking a break until the beginning of February, but please keep those stamps coming in so that they will have lots of sorting to do on their return.

AIREYS INLET NEWS

Forty-six beautiful, amazing and downright quirky trees adorned the backroom of the Aireys Inlet Pub for the highly successful Christmas Tree Festival. The judges, Surf Coast Arts Officer Julie Dyer, and our own talented artist, Phyllis Mill, had the devil of a job to award winners and chose a large number of “commended” entrants. One standout entry was Fred Matyear’s highly creative Pan-tree - some of those frying pans may be recognized by our op shop volunteers. It was great also to have the involvement of the Bellbrae Bric-a Brac and many of our church folk. A huge thank-you must go to Joan Richardson, who inspired us all to stage the event and played the major role in its organization, ably supported by Lachie and our band of enthusiastic helpers.

Harking back to August, we were delighted with the response to our Feed the World event, an activity in community outreach held on the theme of world food security. The attendance was brilliant, reaching many people who would not normally join us on a Sunday morning. The guest speaker, the participation of locally supported overseas aid projects and the inspirational words of our own Rev Helen, were highlights.

The decision has been made to continue shared worship with the Anglican congregation, alternating services. This arrangement will be subject to review early next year. We welcome the new Anglican priest, the Rev John Webster to the Surf Coast.

The Aireys Inlet Community Carols will be held on December the 8th at the Bark Hut and once again we will be anxiously tracking the Bureau of Meteorology’s radar, hoping for fine weather. The children of Aireys Inlet look forward every year to the fun of participating in a nativity pageant and the adults always enjoy their exuberance. The play this year is titled “The Way is Clear” and will include lots of opportunities for singing along with the old favourite carols.

We thank God for the recoveries of several of our members from serious illness this year. We are also grateful for the strength we have been given to continue to serve our community.

Mary Bremner

PS News just to hand – The Community Carols were held in the Aireys Pub (because of looming, threatening clouds) and was a great success – we’ve heard there were great crowds, great singing and great co-operation from the hotel staff! Maybe more “church events” can be held at the pub!

ANGLESEA NEWS

At the annual congregational election, office bearers reappointed for the coming year are Chairperson – Peter Heath, Secretary – Joe Fraser, and Treasurer – Thelma Western.

Next year marks the 16th year for Colin Arthur as the Anglesea representative to Presbytery. The Presbytery of Port Phillip West meets quarterly on a Saturday at Hoppers Crossing. Colin's succinct and comprehensive reports of meetings are deeply appreciated. It is suspected that Colin could be looking forward to long service leave!

In November, Anglesea hosted the ecumenical service with members from the Anglican, Baptist and Catholic churches present. This is always a happy time of sharing worship and fellowship. Our minister Helen led the service.

SPAN (Sing, pray and natter) has met monthly except for a short break in winter. SPAN commences with a meal, followed by a speaker or activity, and concludes with devotions. Recent items have included a talk by Dr Anthony Richards on his visit to Vanuatu by yacht with a medical and dental team. Rev Ikani Vaitohi told of his early life in Tonga and steps leading to becoming a Uniting Church minister now at East Geelong – Leopold. Elizabeth and Peter McKenzie spoke of their trip to Charleville where they were once "parents" in the Frontier Services Student Group Home they established. The screening of a film clip of a pilot at the breakup of Aeroflot in 1991 was followed by discussion on the place of ritual in pastoral care. Margaret Sheehan related the progress of the children in the Las Lomas school for poor children in Peru where official government accreditation has been received: the school is supported by the Anglesea churches and community.

Planning is underway for the 2014 Anglesea Fete to be held on Saturday, 11 January. Proceeds from the Craft Stall will be the basis of our gift to the Uniting World Children's Programme in Amritsar, North India, one which the congregation supported with a donation of \$1,000 from the 2013 Fete. The project which provides education programmes for 400 Dalit children in one village includes the training and provision of teaching staff, uniforms and study materials. Central to the project is raising awareness of the important role girls and women play in society and the value of educating girls.

The Anglesea Afternoon Fellowship continues to provide monthly donations of food for Uniting Care, Geelong (previously CONCERN).

Our annual Advent Baptist–Uniting project is the placing of requested age-related gifts around the Christmas tree in the foyer.

Our thanks go to all who have shared in worship leadership. We thank our minister Helen for her faithful ministry, Bernie Long who leads our services on the third Sunday in the month, lay preachers, organists Barbara Fraser, Elizabeth McKenzie, and Joyce Richards; Peter Heath who operates the overhead screen; Marjorie Hanson the sound system; all who have arranged the flowers.

Joe Fraser, Secretary

BELLBRAE NEWS

This has been a very busy time for Bellbrae for both the church and the Op Shops.

First to the Op Shops. We decided to participate in the state-wide garage sale that took place on the 16th of October, as we were very overstocked with ladies clothing. This required an enormous amount of preparation as all clothing had to be sorted so that our best items could be left on the shelves and hangers in the shop and all other ladies clothes be boxed in categories ready to be put outside on the sale day for \$1 an item. We are very grateful to Helen Robinson who came and gave us both physical and spiritual help. We are also grateful to Raymond Lancaster who came with his trailer and took away all the accumulated rubbish and large unsaleable items that had mounted up beside that storeroom. We also thank two non-church Op Shop helpers Diane Collins and Val Lord who gave us many hours of help in our preparation for the sale.

Things were made more demanding when we discovered the week before the sale after our Sunday church service, and the day after a full day of sorting and preparation on the Saturday, that there had been a flood in the Op Shop kitchen and that several sorted bags and boxes had to be unpacked so that the contents could be dried. Again we thank Helen (and Chris) for taking bags away and doing some of the drying and repacking at home. We also thank Helen for her presence during this difficult time as she helped to keep our spirits up when we were feeling very frustrated and jaded. The Op Shop is now much more user-friendly for the workers and we hope to keep the stock at a manageable level from now on by being more discriminating in what we keep in our storage. Stopping the public from donating unsaleable goods and bags of rags is an on-going problem that we cannot seem to solve.

The sale was a great success because we were also able to dispose of many large items that had made our storeroom awkward and unsafe for many months. We did not sell as many clothes as we had hoped but the sorting process enabled us to then put most of the unsold clothes into bags to pass on to Statewide Rags. Donations of men's clothing were also made to Diversitat.

Shortly after this marathon we had the challenge of a major blockage to our septic system. As outlined in the Bellbrae Banking Report a portable toilet was rented so that the church and shops could remain open. We were able to then get the Drain Doctor to fix the system and we were grateful for his prompt and helpful service.

The Op Shop has enjoyed making a Christmas tree as a contribution to the tree display at Aireys Inlet this week. Absolutely everything on the tree was sourced from the shop and we had great fun selecting tiny items to hang and tie on the tree. Special thanks to Bev Hooper for coordinating this.

Worship at Bellbrae continues to be a time of positive fellowship and we have been pleased to welcome guests from the Bellbrae Resort at regular intervals.

Carleen Thoernberg

TORQUAY NEWS

Set out below are some of the items discussed at the November meeting of Torquay Church Council, followed by other news items.

At the suggestion of the Worship Committee, Rev Helen will take the 5th Sunday in December as a "day off" prior to her Annual Leave in the first two weeks of January 2014. We wish Helen, Chris and Stephen a very relaxing time, and safe travelling!

As a result of the retiring offering after worship on 29 September (5th Sun of the month), \$70 was sent to Frontier Services and \$70 to Missionary Aviation Fellowship. We thank the members of the congregation who were able to make a contribution to these organisations so soon after the very generous donations given to assist the Iranian family earlier in September.

Concern was expressed for the health and well-being of the two men who so very faithfully each week move the church furniture to accommodate Occasional Care (Wed and Fri), and Coffee and Kids (Thurs). Concern was also expressed at the smaller numbers attending worship Sunday by Sunday. It is possible some re-arrangement of the seating will be made to suit the smaller numbers, bringing worshippers closer to each other and to the preacher. It is also hoped this can minimise the amount of furniture moved back and forth each week.

On Sunday 1 December Rev Helen will lead us in a session about "What is the Church?", looking at our Mission Statement and other documents. All members of the congregation are then invited to make confidential comments regarding the church's future and development to Helen via email, in writing or in a face-to-face conversation with her. This opportunity closes on THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER, so that findings can be brought to the congregation on SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER.

Church Council approved the purchase of a computer and DVD. Previously we have relied on borrowing computers from church members, and these are not always compatible with the church's audio/visual equipment. It was decided not to purchase other equipment which had been considered by the Property Maintenance Committee. This committee alerted Church Council to the fact that major church maintenance will be required in the foreseeable future (eg re-blocking the church building, some guttering replacement, painting, and some work on external walls).

Two recent fundraising events resulted in the BBQ at Bunnings on Sat 16 Nov, bringing a profit of \$826 (for church funds), with the "Wondrous Merry" Concert (the following day) donating \$1,200 to UnitingCare Geelong (formerly "Concern"), \$125 to the church for use of venue, power costs, etc, and a donation to the artists. Many thanks to all who organised and worked for these two events, and to those who supported them. A concert policy/guideline is to be drawn up recommending the ratios to be paid to the beneficiary (worthy cause), the artists, and the church for venue hire, carpet cleaning etc.

Financial news from the Linked Council is that by the end of the year there will be a possible shortfall across the four congregations of \$8,000. Congregations are being informed of this through the weekly news sheet and Summer Quarterly Bulletin, and encouraged to assist if possible.

In September we sadly farewelled our Iranian family who moved from Torquay to live in Dandenong. During their short time with us much support and loving deeds were extended to them, and as they left they expressed their enormous appreciation of all that our congregation had done for them. Since their move, Rev Helen and several of our members have kept in touch and report that they are now attending the Dandenong Uniting Church, and that their daughter is settling in to school very well.

The Christmas Workshop for children held at Torquay on Tuesday 3 December was a wonderful success, thanks to Heather Jackman and her large team of willing helpers. It was reported that with the smaller numbers of children attending, a much more relaxed atmosphere was created which was enjoyed by children, parents and the helpers. Thank you, and well done to all concerned!

The Afternoon Fellowship's final gathering for the year, held on 20 November, included the singing of favourite Christmas Carols, accompanied by Valma Griffiths on piano, the allocation of funds raised during the year, and a lovely Christmas afternoon tea.

The Dine Out group had its final lunch for the year at the Torquay Hotel on Monday 25 November. Everyone enjoyed good fellowship and food (including Christmas pudding). We are most grateful that Rev Helen has been able to join us for most meals throughout the year.

The ministry at Elouera continues without a break over the holiday period. Worship on Monday 2 December was well attended, and Carol Singing will take place at 2 pm on Monday 16 December. Singers and supporters are really encouraged to attend this event which means so much to the Elouera residents and staff. Our ministry at Elouera was commenced 18 years ago by Jean Murray (in her capacity as Lay Assistant), and still goes on today. Rev Helen and Jean share the leadership of the worship services, with Pat Lloyd (Jean's sister) playing the organ.

Jean Murray, Secretary

Worship Report for Torquay UC for Summer Bulletin 2013

This year the Worship Team at Torquay have assisted Rev Helen with what she would like to happen at Torquay. The Team also planned and ran the 5th Sunday service in September which was a Frontier Service with a report also from the Walmsley Family with MAF. There was a retiring offering for both worthy causes and we raised \$140.00 to be divided between them. The other 5th Sunday services – one was Easter Sunday and the other in June that Rev Helen led.

The Choir has had a year without our hardworking Captain (Julie) but we had a good supportive First Mate and Ensign (June). The Choir provided Introits each Sunday and music each month whilst Communion was being served. We also contributed to the service on the 3rd Sunday of each month with an Anthem (with a practice on the Thursday prior to this). We have also sung at the couple of christenings that Rev Helen has performed. There have been many times over the year when we are short on choir members due to travel and illness, but those who do attend each Sunday do an amazing job.

We would like to thank Barbara Purnell for always being there to play the piano and lead us in worship through song. We thank June Angus for filling in for Barb not only each

Thursday practice but when Barb has been unavailable to play on a Sunday. Both these talented ladies are very much appreciated by not only the Choir but the congregation as a whole. Barb & June have also been the ones to select the music we (the choir) sing – many thanks to you both.

We would like to give a big thank you to Alan Harper for his contribution through the Audio/Visual in providing us with the service and all the little extras that he adds. Also the beautiful photos displayed at the end of the service showing what amazing works God has provided not only in nature but in the talents that people have been given.

We lost our young family to another church in the area earlier this year and since then the Prayer Leader & Rev Helen have provided material for those children who attend occasionally.

We thank the Rev Helen for her leadership each Sunday and for her thoughtful message each week in the Newsletter.

Robyn Harper, Torquay Worship

Committee

DIVESTMENT OF PROPERTY – EMAIL TO ALL CONGREGATIONS

Today was the day of the portfolio of properties going to a boardroom auction. The good news is we were able to end the sales process half way through proceedings as, due to other sales as well, the total had been reached.

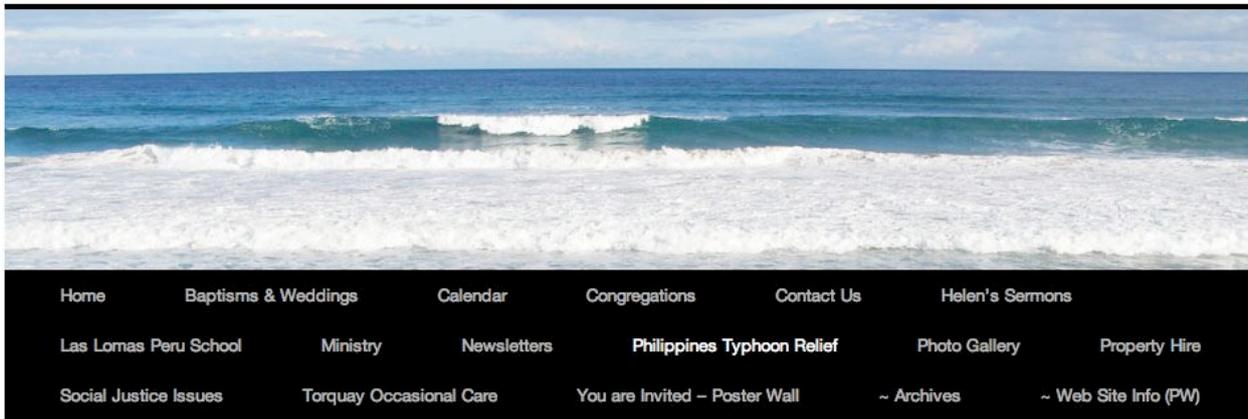
A media release has been issued and a number of media outlets have interviewed General Secretary Rev Dr Mark Lawrence.

All churches who had properties on the divestment list have been notified by phone of the outcome of their particular property. They will receive a more detailed letter via email tomorrow. A whole of church communication will be sent out on Friday.

AFRICA CLEAN STOVES

The Africa Clean Stoves project is progressing, albeit slowly – like all things in Africa. The first hub is producing pellets. We have solved the problems in relation to the production of pellets – no easy task. Maguishi has been appointed as the full-time manager of the project. Maguishi is a Tanzanian who has completed his master's degree working with Dr Don Lotter at the Development Unit at St John's University of Tanzania. There are also two Tanzanian employees – Mark and Jeffrey. The next stage of the project is to promote the sale of pellets in the local communities. This requires cultural changes, which is always a gradual process. The project will benefit from having a manager who is familiar with the local culture, fluent in Swahili and keen to meet the aims of the project – i.e. to reduce deforestation, reduce many health problems, and provide employment for local villagers. Many thanks to all who have contributed to the project.

Val Clark



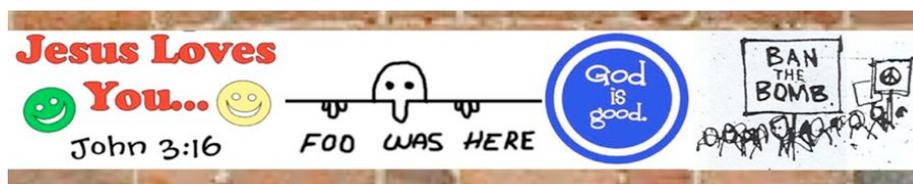
Our web site is our window to the world and the worlds window to us. We live at a time when we can have contact with almost the entire population of the world if they take the time to seek us out.

I am not delusional enough to think that thousands of people will be clamoring to seek us out just because it is possible to do so. You may be surprised that we have been contacted by a couple living and working in Asia so that they could organise their wedding at one of our churches. We have been contacted by relatives to see if we could help in contacting and assisting family members in detention on Christmas Island. We have given members of our congregations the ability to read our newsletter whilst they were travelling overseas.

We have been able to advertise Torquay Occasional Care and the Bellbrae Book Room and Brick a Brac in such a way that people using Google to search for such projects would come up on the first page of a google search. We have been able to advertise Torquay's Music Concerts, the Aireys Inlet Christmas Tree Festival, and Christmas Carols. I am hoping that as result of our Web Site we may have people from Geelong or Melbourne visiting the Anglesea's Fete whilst out for a Saturday drive.

We have had bookings of the Anglesea Church property because of our property hire page, we helped in advertising the Las Lomas School Project.

We have done all of these things and much more but we are just scratching the surface of what we can do, if you have any ideas, suggestion or would just like to ask a question please feel free to contact me. If you want to know what events are on then have a look at our "You are Invited - Poster Wall".



There is a great deal of information on our site, please take the time to check it out and use it to your advantage.

Peter Heath (peter.heath@me.com)

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
The work of Christmas begins.

To feed the lost
To heal the broken
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner
To rebuild the nations
To bring peace among all
To make music in the heart.