



Surfcoast Uniting Churches

3rd January 2021

Everyone is welcome to the Surfcoast UC service, available on our website this Sunday from 9:00am : www.surfcoast.unitingchurch.org.au

Airey's Inlet is Live on Zoom @ 1:30pm

Bellbrae will meet to worship in their church @ 11:00am (max 16)

Torquay will meet for worship on 10th January @ 9.30am (max 54)

Rev. Suzie Castle : [m:0421023197](tel:0421023197) e: suzie.castle@gmail.com



Dear Everyone,

So here we are, standing with the world to farewell 2020. I won't find it a sad goodbye as it has had more challenges in it than any year I've been alive. Even so, 2020 with its difficulties, stresses and frustrations, has offered grand opportunities for outreach and identity for us here at the

Surf Coast. We give thanks to God for many opportunities:

- to still sell items online while the op shop and book room couldn't open. We made a few hundred dollars over a short amount of time and grew the Bellbrae Facebook page to 397 followers.
- to rejoice with Torquay in the completed build and dreaming of all that can happen within its walls.
- to share with Aireys Inlet in the way Zoom worship services have unfolded as they developed a wonderful format of quality music and unpacking scripture texts to discover deeper God's presence in life and their community.

These are only a few things that have happened throughout a time of world and Church crisis and recovery. Not only is another year gone, but an entire decade has been lived. Years turn, seasons come and go, people stay or move through our lives, homes and memories. There is a constant - Christ Jesus, who moves to fill our hearts with faith and heads with dreams.

We have come far with online services, weekly home delivery of worship services, Zoom worship services, meetings on Zoom, chairs and secretaries across the three congregations now meeting regularly to encourage and support each other. I have focused on leadership over the past 6 months with so many incredible people here. Leaders, you bless each of us with your generous sharing and compassion for the people Jesus gave you to lead.

Thank you all who have continued to work with me to move us through many COVID restrictions in a way that was safe but meaningful. I don't know what you are hoping for in 2021, but one of my focuses is to get back to building relationships with each of you, with each other, with Presbytery and our local community. Whatever you do to welcome the new year, may the year itself bring you a season of hope, peace, love and joy.

Rev Suzie Castle
Minister of the Word

Rev Suzie shares Christmas Day outside at Airey's Inlet. Dec 25th 2020



Do join us: Aireys Inlet Uniting Church Worship by Zoom - Contact Mary by email bremnerkm@gmail.com.

We acknowledge that we meet to worship on the land of the Wadawurrung people and pay our respects to their elders past and present. Find out more at www.wadawurrung.org.au.

Lectionary Readings:

Christmas 2: Jan 3rd
Jeremiah 31: 7-14
Psalm 147: 12-20
Ephesians 1: 3-14
John 1(1-9), 10-18

Baptism of Jesus: Jan 10th
Genesis 1: 1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19: 1-7
Mark 1: 4-11

Wanted: Bunnings Barbeque volunteers. Torquay has been offered Saturday 9th January as a fundraiser for playgroup. Under new COVID requirements we need 5 volunteers every shift. Shifts are 10 to 12, 12 to 2 and 2 to 4pm.

Please contact John Peck on 0488 177 983 or Sylvia on 0427 836 495 with your preferred shift time if you are able to help.

You will need a washable apron, sensible clothes and shoes and your own mask. Gloves & cleaning equipment is provided.



What's happening this next week:

6pm TONIGHT! At the Genat's, BYO chairs & food to share at a LONG Table.

Saturday 2nd: Op-Shop 10 to 4. On the roster - Bev H, Carleen T, Maxine F, Karleen B, Robyn H.

Saturday 9th: Grab a sanger at the Bunnings BarBQ in Torquay

9.30am Sun 10th Jan: Torquay starts worship services

Congratulations to Sheryl and Eric Conlon who have been blessed with two grandsons born December 28th at 10.12 and 10.15am. The boys weighed in at 3.2 and 2.6 kg and all is well. Grandparents have been able to have a cuddle.

And to Pauline & Neil Shinkfield who have welcomed and cuddled a **new granddaughter**.



NEW COVID Restrictions:

From **5pm** tonight the following restrictions will be in place in Victoria:

- wearing of masks will be compulsory indoors in any location apart from people's own private home, and
- people will be able to have gatherings of only 15 people at private homes, down from 30.

Further information can be found at <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/new-years-eve-restrictions>

This newsletter has some extra reading this week on another page — a wonderful "Spill the Beans" reflection on Ecclesiastes 3: 1-13.

Happy Birthday to Robert Packett and Liz Barkla and any other January babies ! How lovely to start 2021 with a birthday party.



You are invited to attend "Adventures in Colour" an art exhibition opening at 5pm on 1st January at Bellbrae Uniting Church. Open days are 10 to 4pm every Friday & Saturday in January. **Frances Griffiths** is the artist and says "It's an exhibition of work I recalled from my adventure travelling around Australia solo last year. It's about colour and the mood of colour and many interesting things I observed." There are also some interior images and a couple of special places I travelled overseas. All this work was produced during the COVID lockdown. I needed a purpose to keep me centred and I kept myself very busy!"

Come & Enjoy. Every Friday and Saturday in January. 10am to 4pm

Airey's Inlet St Aidan's Church, 29 Great Ocean Road, Airey's Inlet. aireysinletunitingchurch@gmail.com

Bellbrae: Bellbrae Uniting Church. School & Anglesea Roads, Bellbrae

Torquay: Torquay Uniting Church, 27 Anderson Street, Torquay

BELLBRAE BRIC-A-BRAC OP SHOP & BOOK ROOM :Uniting Church Hall, School Road, Bellbrae. Ph: 5261 5139

Weekly offerings can be made via direct debit or credit to the congregation account :

BSB: 083-929 and Account Number 93-009-8403 Please add notes in the deposit area to identify your congregation:

Aireys Inlet:3231AI, Bellbrae:3228BB or Torquay:3228TQ

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS and all queries to: newslettersurfcoastuc@gmail.com DEADLINE: Thursday at 4pm

Spill the Beans reflection

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

A one-time Bishop of Durham, Handley Moule, was called out to a rather bad mining disaster.

As he prepared to meet with the relatives he was unsure of what he might say to the people devastated by their loss and the tragedy that had befallen them. In his uncertainty, he saw a bookmark that his mother had given him.

He picked up the hand woven bookmark and all he could see were the loose silk threads which seemed to have no set pattern, in fact they looked a bit of a tangled mess, a mistake even. It was only when he turned it over and saw beautifully and boldly sown the words, "God is Love" which gave him the words to help folk to at least start to make sense of what happened and where God was in that terrible situation, in the midst of the mess and entangled threads.

The passage from Ecclesiastes, at first glance, seems quite chaotic, even fatalistic. Although written in beautiful poetic language that trips off the tongue in all its familiarity, we have a depiction of the bare threads hanging from our world. These verses reveal the stark reality of a world full of contrasts, and lives that are equally made up of contrasting situations.

The reader would be forgiven for thinking that seen in isolation this well known passage in Ecclesiastes offers no hope in a world and a life where we have no real control over what befalls us.

Taking a closer look at this passage, a clearer picture emerges, especially if our eyes are also drawn to some future day, as depicted in the vision contained in Revelation. We get a clearer vision when we are able to step back to see the bigger picture, the picture that God sees from the beginning of time until those last days when he shall make all things new. In the same way, looking too closely at the stitching pattern in a piece of cross-stitch means we miss the bigger picture. Only when our vision encompasses the whole needlework creation, and not just a tiny part of it, do we understand what the picture reveals to us.

There are times when it is only the close-up picture that we see, and we get bogged down in all the conflicting details and challenges. Sometimes life seems out of control, but God comes to centre us again with the assurance that all time, and our time, are in his hands. Hope is in God's handling of things, in his ultimate plans and in the light that shines in Jesus.

In the midst of the complex and tangled threads that all too often make up our lives, what is God saying? He is inviting us not just to be passive spectators watching from the side but to be active participants, taking hold of situations, both within and beyond our control, that we might face up to them and find a way through.

How can our churches be a Light for our time in our own communities?

A New Year, with all its new possibilities, offers many of us the chance to re-evaluate, to step back and look at our lives, and could acts as an encouragement for a new start as God's light shines to light up a different and exciting way.

