



Surfcoast Uniting Churches

10th 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 @ 3.00pm

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

Torquay will meet to worship in their church @ 9.30am (max 54 + 24)

Rev. Suzie Castle : m:0421023197 e: suzie.castle@gmail.com

Dear friends

I write this on Thursday afternoon watching the riots take place in Washington. While it is political, it is also theological as many supporters of President Trump claim that the Democrats are evil. Evil enough to prompt the return of Jesus. Yesterday, January 6th, was the *Feast of Epiphany* and I am reminded that an insecure ruler named Herod was so threatened by the birth of Jesus that he tried to overthrow the result by putting a hit out on a toddler. Theology and scripture are needed together to think through what we are seeing and hearing from the USA. What follows are snippets of a post by Christy Lubbers Berghoef regarding the election and Christians. The full account is on my Facebook page.

"Christian traditions throughout history have embraced a variety of end times theologies. One such position asserts that Jesus will return when the state of humanity becomes consumed by evil and destruction beyond repair.

I am seeing a disturbing trend among some of my white evangelical Republican friends (religious leaders included) stating that Democrats winning elections is so evil that Jesus will surely return - VERY soon.

Just to be clear, the enslavement, torture and dehumanization of black and brown bodies on our soil for centuries was not bad enough to usher in this return of Jesus? The removal and slaughter of indigenous populations was not enough to usher in Jesus' return? Plagues that decimated populations was not enough to bring him back? Hitler's ovens were not bad enough to usher in the return of Jesus? Various genocides, mass poverty, bloody civil wars and countless other atrocities across the globe throughout history were not bad enough to bring about the return of Jesus?

None of these unspeakable realities hit the bar of awfulness that is required to compel Jesus to return. But Democrats winning elections in the United States is the thing that finally hit the mark.

It reveals precisely how tiny their Jesus is and how created in their own image, how hollowed out the richness and depth of Jesus' life and teachings have become. Perhaps it ultimately signals that they have surrendered a significant part of Jesus to the authority of Trumpism rather than surrendering themselves to the authority of the Jesus of the Gospels. May a spirit of love, truth and goodness be resurrected." C.L.B

The Feast of Epiphany tells us that the paranoid Herod king sent death squads to Bethlehem with instructions to kill all male babies under the age of two. To me, this is the worst story in the bible - the Slaughter of Innocents - all so that one man could keep power.

It's tough when we see and hear Christians divided because of political and theological ideologies. It's tougher when Jesus is used to back up claims of a particular side or a weapon to justify destruction, hatred and harm.

Today, I am remembering the Christ who, because of a powerful and yet fearful ruler, became a refugee and fled to Egypt. **This is the God we follow.**

May this 2021 contain immeasurable peace, hope, love and joy to you and yours

Rev Suzie Castle
Minister of the Word

Lectionary Readings:

Baptism of Jesus: Jan 10th

Genesis 1: 1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19: 1-7
Mark 1: 4-11

Epiphany 2: Jan 17th

1 Samuel 3: 1-10 (11-20)
Psalm 139: 1-6,13-18
1 Corinthians 6: 12-20
John 1: 43-51

A Thank You

This year has just started, and I do not want to let another week go by without expressing my admiration for the Bellbrae church community.

After being encouraged by our minister, Suzie, to keep in contact during Covid restrictions by conducting our own zoom service, together with the help of a computer savvy member, we embarked on the adventure of joining together weekly, by zoom. At first, we struggled with music, but persevered as we love to sing, and eventually solved that problem with the aid of a very capable Carleen.

We were joined by some Aireys Inlet members, who then set up their own service and also by a member who found himself stranded in America.

Throughout this year, I have been amazed by the willingness of the Bellbrae community to lead worship, many of whom had never done so before, and did so very capably. We have all grown in our ability to contribute to our prayer life. We have grown considerably through discussing Suzie's sermons, and both asking questions of our own and answering questions posed.

Most importantly we have been able to support one other through a very difficult year, for which I will always be grateful. On a more practical note, we used the time to have our church floor resurfaced, which looks beautiful, and we have taken delivery of new chairs thanks to a grant from the Simpson fund



To the Bellbrae community I say well done and thank you.

Doreen Stephens

What's happening this next week:

Sat 9th: Grab a sausage & sauce at the Bunnings BarBQ in Torquay. To aid Coffee & Kids. 10am to 4pm

Sat 9th: OPShop Roster this week: 10am- Doreen, Carleen T, 1pm—Tricia G, Jane S and Anna M

9.30am Sun 10th Jan: Torquay starts worship services

Sat 16th: OpShop Roster: 10am—Maxine F, Carol M, Carleen T, 1pm—Joan Y, Karleen B and Lyn B.

Sun 17th: Airey's Inlet starts live worship services at 9.15am.

Invitations:

For the last week before opening to live worship,
Join Aireys Inlet UC Worship at 3pm by Zoom
Contact Mary at bremnerkm@gmail.com.

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And all Surfcoast churches and friends are invited to join Torquay UC with a live Communion Service at 9.30am on this Sunday 10th.

The chapel and narthex can hold 54 +24 and we would love to see it full!
Please arrive a few moments early to ensure COVID safe signing in and movement.

Coffee will be served after the service in our new OAK TREE Place facility.

Save the Date: Sunday 14th February . Lunch & the opening of the Oak Tree Place multi purpose space.

"Adventures in Colour" is an art exhibition 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.

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

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.

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