

Sunday 22nd March 2020

Greetings and welcome to this week's newsletter

A Note from Linda

By now you will have heard about Church Council's decision to suspend our Sunday services and other activities. This has been a very difficult decision, made after many hours of discernment, prayer and discussion, in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on our church community.

Reading through this newsletter you will see clearly what kind of things will change over the next few weeks / months / as long as it will take for us to be able to gather together once more.

Blessings and peace to you all, Linda

This Sunday

On Sunday morning at 9.30am we invite you all to light a candle. Let's make this our weekly ritual while we are a church scattered, yet connected.

See Worship and Prayer resource for this week on pages 3 and 4.

What has been cancelled in the next month

Sunday morning services and all small groups have been suspended plus the following:

22 March	Prayer Walk	7 April	ToFs
24 March	Threads	8 April	Triple C's
27 March	Friendship Club	9 April	Maundy Thursday prayer journey
29 March	Baptism of Amelie Stevenson	10 April	Good Friday service
31 March	Stay and Play	12 April	Dawn Service at Thorndon Park
5 April	Messy Easter		Easter Celebration service

New Facebook group

Are you a Facebook user? We have set up a new group for Athelstone members as one way that we can stay connected as a church community during this time. Contact Linda if you need more information.

Lenten Appeal 2020

Each year the Uniting Church of Australia, through Uniting World, carefully selects a significant project of outreach and christian mission. The 2020 project in partnership with the Protestant Church of Maluka in Indonesia seeks to bring Muslims and Christians together to build peace and beat poverty.

Our intention was to have a special offering on Sunday 5th April. As we won't be gathering on that morning, we encourage you to give online. Further information www.lentevent.com

Friendship Club closure

It has been decided to cease meetings of the Friendship Club from Friday 20th March until further notice due to the Coronavirus disease.

Margaret Hunt

Packing Day 2020 Save the date (we hope) – Sunday May 31st and Monday June 1st

Please speak to Jayne Nicholas (0418836266) if you have any queries.

Military Wives - fundraiser for CMLA and MiniM choir - postponed

This movie fundraiser has been postponed to later in the year. For more info, contact Sharonne Price on 0417811517.

Stay and Play Playgroup

Sadly, Playgroup has been suspended too.

“This last week was a quieter week, but we welcomed yet another new family. Much discussion was had as to how we will progress and support families as Covid 19 restrictions are brought about. Carers and team helpers will be kept informed of ways we will connect with families by email.”

Bruce and Joy

Please make contact with Bruce or Joy if you are available to help at various times to maintain the wirra. New helpers are always welcome. Bruce and Joy Stewart Phone: 8336 2671 or Email: bruceandjoy@bigpond.com

Wider Church news - <https://sa.uca.org.au> You can also subscribe to receive UC. E-News personally.

Electronic Giving – Regular electronic giving or one off donations can be made using the following details:

Account name: Athelstone Uniting Church

Account BSB: 704 095 Account number: 110043

Contact Treasurer Glen Luestner for more information. M: 0401-052-842 E: glenluestner@gmail.com

Pastoral care - The Pastoral Care Oversight Team are working on ways for us to care for one another during this time. Whilst this provides structured ways of caring for people, we encourage you to still continue to reach out and love and care for one another, as so many of you do so well – within our church community, and also those around us. Please do let us know if you are need of support. Contact a member of our Pastoral Care Oversight Team for assistance:

Rev Linda Driver 0458 500 656

Bob Stevenson 0400 641 242

Brenton Summers 0400 632 829

Ann Brown 0413 581 554

Prayer Requests - Can we support you in prayer? Here's how:

Prayer Chain - send an email to, or call Brenton Summers, who will pass your prayer request on to a group of people who faithfully pray in response to Prayer Chain emails.

Confidential Prayers - if the issue is more personal you are invited to contact Linda for individual prayer or one the members of the Pastoral Care Oversight team (Brenton Summers, Ann Brown, Bob Stevenson and Linda). All prayer requests going to the team will be kept strictly confidential within this team.

Prayers for Others (Sunday Worship) – While our community is scattered, Linda will include these in a weekly Worship and Prayer resource. If you have something you would like to be included, please contact Linda. “We are all called to pray for one another, and so we are all encouraged to offer to pray for, or with others, especially if they share a concern with you.” (James 5:13-16)

Website – We encourage you to visit our website: www.athelstonechurch.org.au

Newsletter contributions – Please email newsletter@athelstonechurch.org.au by 5pm Wed.

Lectionary readings - You will find these in your copy of the Uniting Church Calendar.

What's on 23rd – 29th March

Monday	23 rd	4.45-6.45 pm	Waratah Calisthenics College*	Auditorium	<i>* Starred activities are organised by community hirers who will continue to meet for the time being.</i>
		6.30-8.30 pm	Gain Momentum – Pilates *	Top Hall	
Tuesday	24 th	9.30-11.30 am	Gain Momentum – Pilates *	Top Hall	
		7.00 pm	Church Council	Online	
Wednesday	25 th	9.30–10.30 am	Gain Momentum – Pilates *	Top Hall	
		6.30-8.30 pm	Waratah Calisthenics College *	Auditorium	
Saturday	28 th	9.30-11.30 am	Gain Momentum – Pilates *	Top Hall	
		9.30-11.30 am	Waratah Calisthenics College*	Auditorium	
Sunday	29 th	9.30 am	Light a candle and spend time in worship and prayer	Wherever you are	

Worship and Prayer Resource for Sunday March 22

9.30am Light a candle

As you light it, think of the light of Christ bringing peace into the world and give thanks.

Think of your sisters and brothers in Christ doing the same wherever they are and how that connects us as one people and give thanks.

Read: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and John 9:1-41

Reflect

Refer to week 3 in the Lenten study. Available here

https://craigmitchell.typepad.com/mountain_masala/2020/03/weekly-lenten-studies-reflections.html

or request a copy by emailing Carol our Office Coordinator. (See further worship ideas below)

Something to think about:

“And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.”

Kitty O'Meara

Pray

Use this opportunity to pray in silence for our Church, our community and the world.

In particular, please pray for those who are mourning: Dean Brooks, whose brother passed away; and Yvonne Mitchell, whose husband passed away.

(If you are with others, one can read this prayer, while others can join in with the words in bold)

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray:

Lord, we are in interesting times -
things are changing so quickly.

We are unsure what to do, where we can go,
what we still hold and what we cancel.

Together: Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

Lord, there is fear around us -
people are afraid and anxious.

As people try to control something they can,
and hence toilet paper is stockpiled -
help us to be a people of peace and hope.

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

Lord, you are our peace, our hope,
in all times, including troubled times.

Help us to reach out to our families, friends,
neighbours and work colleagues with your hope.

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

We pray for those infected and for those caring for them.
We pray for those living in fear, including children and elderly,
for those isolated – now even more so,
and for wisdom for all those making decisions.

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

Loving God, we pray for a cure -
we pray for all those working on this.

We pray too for paramedics, doctors, nurses
and all those working tirelessly in our healthcare system.

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

We pray for casual workers without work,
for all those affected financially,
for travel agents, airline staff, sportspeople,
those working in tourism, supermarkets, schools and venues,
and for the vulnerable already struggling to make ends meet.

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

Lord, help us to be wise as a community of faith,
to be mindful of each other and others in this.
Help us to not forget the thousands dying every day
from hunger, disease, violence and war.

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

As a scared world needs a fearless church,
help us to be a prophetic voice in our communities,
drinking from the living water of grace and forgiveness.
Help us to draw together at the well,
and to reflect your love, compassion, grace and peace.

Lord, we look to you today, lead us we pray

Amen

Rev Lynne Aird, 14/3/20
shared in the Prayers that Unite facebook group

Offering

All that we are, and all that we have is first a gift from God. Our offering to God is from the fullness of all we have received. You may wish to consider how you can use the gifts God has given to you at this time. For some, the Coronavirus has resulted in huge amounts of work and stress, and God-given gifts may be called upon. For others, life is significantly quieter. Are there ways you want to offer your gifts to God in a new way: offering a listening ear for someone feeling lonely, helping someone navigate technology over the phone? Spend some time thinking about how we can use our resources – financial, physical, emotional and spiritual in these unusual circumstances.

Blessing and Benediction

May God strengthen us in times of uncertainty,
grant us peace when we are afraid,
empower us to love, as we have first been loved,
and grow within us eternal hope for the future.
In the name of God, the source of all life,
Christ, the sustainer of all being,
and the Spirit, who connects us all together. Amen.

The Centre for Music Liturgy and the Arts:
“Tethered to God” from “Worship in Times of Isolation”

Further Worship Ideas

Here are some more ways that you can connect with God's Word:

- Rev Mark Kickett was to be our guest preacher this week. Listen or download here for a past message that he gave at Burnside City Uniting Church: https://burnsidecityuc.org.au/worship-messages-audio/?sermon_id=254
- Morialta Uniting Church is planning to offer a weekly worship service on YouTube beginning with a limited edition this Sunday. Click here for more information: <http://www.morialtauca.org.au/virtual-church/>
- Our website has past sermons available. This is in the process of being updated. Please keep checking back over the next week or so. <https://athelstonechurch.org.au/sermons-2/>
- CMLA (the Centre for Music Liturgy and the Arts) are preparing resources: <https://www.cmla.org.au/resources/worship-in-times-of-isolation/>
- Mediacom has offered a free gift for this week.: **Follow this link** to obtain a free 'Seasons Fusion' resource for this Sunday 22 March. It explores this week's lectionary and provides an opportunity to reflect, pray and connect scripture with life.
- LifeFM radio station 107.9 are starting a 10am Worship music and address from 2 ministers this Sunday
- "A Sermon For Every Sunday" website has produced a worship service outline to use with others at home. Click here for a link to the resource. It also includes a link to sermons to listen to: <https://mailchi.mp/asermonforeverysunday/this-weeks-sermon-1744145?e=e9aed2be77>
- Songs of Praise – a TV show with inspiring hymns and songs, together with uplifting stories of faith from around the UK and beyond is available on ABC TV and ABC iview

Thank you to all those who have contributed to these resources. We will add to this list in coming weeks. Keep your ideas coming!