

Don't forget to light a candle at 9.30 am on Sunday

Sunday 29th March 2020

Greetings and welcome to this week's newsletter

A Note from Linda

Hello to you all! I hope that you are all staying safe, physically distanced and have super clean hands as we navigate this strange world we find ourselves in!

Your Church Council, your Pastoral Care Oversight team, the Office team and I are all working hard to be proactive in our response to what is happening. We are learning together as we meet online rather than face to face.

As you would be aware, the Church building is closed, the Office is closed and all activities of the Church have been suspended. Our hirers have also suspended all their activities.

The Church itself is not closed - we, the people, are the Church, the body of Christ. This is our time to live out that reality as we continue to worship God (in different ways) and care for one another and share God's love with those around us.

We are working on ways to remain connected, ways to resource you in your spiritual journey, ways to support you through pastoral care, and ways to resource you so you can reach out to others with love and grace.

Each week you will receive at least two communications from us: the newsletter and a worship and prayer resource. Please reach out to me or to members of the pastoral care oversight team if you are struggling or need support.

A new private Facebook group has been established for keeping members of our church community connected. If you are on Facebook and are not yet part of this group, please contact me and I'll send you an invitation. If you are not on Facebook, or haven't been using it, perhaps this is the time to consider getting connected in this way.

This is of course only one way that we do this. We can (and do) ring or text each other, email, or drop off notes or care packages to one another. Thank you to everyone who is doing this. It is so important for everyone to feel connected at this time.

It is also important that we care for ourselves. Remember our unBusy series and our prayer chair? Now is the time to reconnect with God and ourselves. Take time to be still and to breathe slowly and deeply.

"Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

Blessings and peace, Linda

Faith Wellbeing and COVID-19

The global spread of COVID-19 is causing high levels of anxiety, and people have been responding in a range of ways to what is essentially their lowered levels of wellbeing, an important factor in mental health. While most of us can see that having fights in supermarket queues and stockpiling many months' supply of items like toilet paper is not particularly helpful, we are probably at a bit of a loss about what to do that will make us feel better, especially as quarantine measures become more and more stringent. Attached you will find a helpful article by Rev Dr Judy Redman with some suggestions for Christians to consider.

Electronic Giving

It is important to continue giving generously during this difficult time. If you usually give with cash, please consider electronic giving. Alternately you could place your cash offering into an envelope each week then bring these envelopes to our first gathering when it is time to worship together once more.

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

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 Maluku 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

Dean Brook has this to share with you

Compassion

In our Moderator's (recent) pastoral letter, he stated how we have a compassionate God and he asked us all to be compassionate.

What does this mean?

Jurjen Beumer in his book, "*Henri Nouwen*", quotes Henri Nouwen as saying, "The word *compassion* is derived from the Latin words *pati* and *cum*, which together mean to suffer with. Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears."

He calls us into a deep relationship with those in need. This changes their lives.

When we offer someone sympathy, we are giving them care, comfort and love. That is good and important but when we offer compassion we are offering healing.

When one looks at the healing miracles of Jesus, he firstly forms a relationship with them then speaks his word of healing. That is how the healing takes place. Similarity with us, when we form a deep compassionate relationship the person being cared for feels our closeness or oneness with them and our wholeness flows into the relationship bringing healing.

This is what our world needs now in this time of universal pain.

I don't know how it works, I just know that it does. For example, when you have had a meaningful conversation with someone, and they have responded by saying, "*I feel better now.*" That is compassionate healing.

So, the best we can offer anyone is just ourselves in loving compassion.

Blessings to you all, Dean Brook

P.S. We can't give one another physical hugs at this time but we can still give verbal ones.

New Postal Address for Athelstone Uniting Church

Athelstone Uniting Church has a new mailing address starting from today (26th March 2020).

The mailing address is now:

PO Box 307

Athelstone SA 5076

Mail with the street address will be redirected to this PO Box for the next 6 months but please ensure you update/use this new address for any correspondence/contacts for the church in future.

The existing mailbox will remain at the church for those who wish to still drop things off but please be aware that this letterbox may not be checked as frequently during our current closure period as Carol will be managing the office from home after today.

Stay and Play @ Home

Email resources will be sent out to enrolled families on the dates below.

DATES for 2020

Term 1

31st March

Term 2

5th May, 19th May, 2nd June, 16th June, 30th June

With the suspension of all face to face activities at Athelstone Uniting Church, Stay and Play @ Home has been launched. We will be providing a programme of activities for all currently enrolled families, to support carers to keep preschoolers happily occupied. We are considering how this community outreach could be extended.

If you would like to be part of the team to do this, please make contact with Bruce and Joy.

Bruce and Joy Stewart Phone: 8336 2671 or Email: bruceandjoy@bigpond.com

Packing Day at Athelstone Uniting Church has been suspended for 2020

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

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

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.

**Practise
Good
Hygiene**

