

Sunday 13th December 2020

Greetings and welcome to this week's newsletter.



From the Supply Minister

How do we celebrate Christmas in the midst of Covid and other grief?

This header caught my eye in an email from our Uniting Church Uniting Care organisation at Bowden. We support Bowden's work here at Athelstone and it is an agency of social welfare that the Uniting church values deeply, with ongoing support from congregations and keeping their work in our prayers.

Walk down any major shopping mall and it is inescapable that Christmas is coming. Traditionally a time of joy, celebration and gathering with family, for some this year will be a painful reminder of those who died or remain trapped in other countries unable to return home. So why haven't we cancelled Christmas this year?

Evan Imber-Black in her paper *Rituals in the Time of COVID-19*¹ provides one explanation. *'Rituals may provide us with a steady resource of connection, whether as daily rituals for partings at the start of a school and work day, greetings when we return to one another, meals, and bedtime; family traditions on each family's "inside" calendar, including birthdays, anniversaries, family re-unions, and days that may be idiosyncratically special to a couple or family; holidays, on a given culture's calendar including religious, ethnic, national, or secular; and life cycle rituals, marking key events, and developmental stages, including birth, adolescent rites of passage, graduations, weddings, and funerals'*

For many the rituals of Christmas, religious and secular provide us with a much-needed sense of stability and order in a world of chaos and uncertainty. Whether it is the story of a baby in a manger, wise men and angels or the traditions of gift giving, food and being together, for a moment we can forget and feel cocooned as we sing the same words, tell the same story, share the same jokes and eat the same food. There is little discussion of 'doing something different this Christmas' and no suggestion that it should be abandoned. Instead it becomes a time when we reflect on what we have and, in this country especially how fortunate many of us are.

A good reason to invite family and friends to church at Christmas.
Let's trust God that there will be enough room at this inn.

Sue Ellis.



¹EVAN IMBER-BLACK (2020) *Rituals in the Time of COVID-19: Imagination, Responsiveness, and the Human Spirit Family Process* Vol 59,3 pp 912-921

Christmas services

Following the Church Council's decision to have two Christmas Eve services at both 6.30 pm and again at 9.00pm. please note that these two services will be the same service repeated, to allow estimated numbers of attendees to be distributed in a covid-safe way across the two time slots. It is anticipated that the usual Christmas Day numbers will be achievable. Both services will be suitable for families.

The congregation is requested to give an indication of their attendance at these services along with any estimates of additional family members/guests who may attend.

This will help the planning for covid safe seating arrangements.

6.30pm Christmas Eve 24th December - It's Time to Receive the Christmas Gift!

9.00pm Christmas Eve 24th December - It's Time to receive the Christmas Gift (repeat)

9.30am Christmas Day 25th December - Time to unwrap the Greatest Gift!

Worship on-site

It is so important for us to remain vigilant with regard to our response to COVID-19.

As you prepare to come to worship onsite, here are some important things to remember...

- Every person who attends activities on our church property is now required to register their attendance by using the COVID SAfe Check-In where at all possible. This is a government requirement, so please ensure you bring your mobile phones to church, and take the time to set up the app ready to scan our QR Code and upload your contact details on entry. A sign in sheet will be available when use of the QR code is absolutely impossible.
- Please don't come if you are unwell or if you have been in any of the high risk locations at times identified by SA Health.
- Think about wearing a mask, although this isn't mandatory it is one more thing we can do to keep others and ourselves safe in enclosed spaces.
- Also remember to:
 - Wear warm clothes! We'll have the exhaust fans on and windows open to keep the air circulating - this reduces the risks of COVID, especially as we will be singing.
 - Avoid parking next to the top hall – this space is still being used by Medical HQ.
 - Once you enter, you will be welcomed with a warm *Hello*, and possibly an elbow or toe tap. (Please refrain from handshaking, kissing or hugging at church for the time being). Please remember that we are still being encouraged to maintain the physical distancing of 1.5 m when gathering with others outside of our immediate household. You'll be signed in (as we need to keep a record of attendance) and please use the hand sanitiser provided.
 - Seating is spaced out to allow for physical distancing. Those who come from the same household can sit together (if you wish to!)
 - The Offering will be received at the end of the service. A receptacle will be provided near the exit. We continue to encourage regular giving through direct debit or electronic transfer.
 - Morning tea will not be provided. We encourage you to connect with others by either having a coffee at a local café to support their business (many of our folk frequent Caffè Settebello and the Rezz on Sundays) or consider inviting others to share a coffee in your home.
 - We encourage you to approach the 'Zoom screen' at the back of the church before and after the service and interact with those who are connecting online. It's important for us to help everyone feel welcome and included wherever they are.

Worship Online or at Home

- If you choose not to attend for whatever reason, you can view the service as it is happening, using the same <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86912199103>
- Meeting ID: 869 1219 9103
- We will also provide a lectionary-based Worship at Home resource.

COVID Safe Check-In process

The South Australian Government is introducing COVID Safe Check-In, to enhance contact tracing and keep our community COVID safe. If someone in South Australia tests positive to COVID-19, the COVID Safe Check-In enables SA Health to quickly contact others who may have been exposed to the virus and stop the spread of COVID-19.

COVID Safe Check-In is a new feature that has been added to the free [mySA GOV app](#). Download the app from [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#) using your smart phone. In the mySA GOV app, select the COVID Safe Check-In tile. Then when you arrive at church on Sunday morning, you can follow the prompts to scan the unique QR code and check in. When you first enter the COVID Safe Check-In tile, you will be asked to fill in your details and mobile number. You will then get a text message with a unique code to enter in to the app. This is to verify your phone number. You will only have to do this once. Note that the mySA GOV app can be used to record your driver's license and motor registration details, however, you do not need to fill in all your license or registration details to use the covidsafe Check-In, just scroll down the page to the CovidSafe Check-In feature at the bottom of the screen. If the check-in tab doesn't appear (i.e. on Android phones) then you may need to uninstall the mySA GOV app and reinstall the app to update to the latest version of the app.

If you do not have a compatible smart phone, you will need to sign in by hand and ensure that the church office has your current contact details. A sheet will be provided in the foyer for you to check off your name if you are not using the QR code. Note that this sign in step is now necessary and will be in addition to our Tick and Flick register, which records everyone's service attendance for our own records. Children in the presence of parents do not need to sign in.

Church Office Closure

The church office will be closed from 12.30 pm on Thursday 17th December 2021 and not reopen until Tuesday 2nd February. So next week will also be the last weekly newsletter produced until February. Please ensure all notices for the January period are sent to Carol no later than Wednesday 16th December.

Worship Rosters for February 2021 and March-May 2021

Worship rosters for February will be released next week. Over January, please also start considering when you are available in March to May 2021. Some roster planning forms are in the entry foyer. Please return completed forms to the marked tray in the vestry by the 2nd February 2021. If nothing about your volunteer roles is changing (i.e. task and timing preferences) then you don't have to fill in the form unless you want to – just email me any unavailable dates and I will leave all other info the same! Thank you.

Carol Lang

Congregation AGM – 21st February 2021

Thank you to everyone who has completed a written report and submitted it to Carol and Allan. Church Council wishes to advise all members of Athelstone Uniting Church that we will be holding our AGM on Sunday 21 February 2021 at 10.45am. There will be vacancies to be filled, so we ask you to prayerfully consider whether this is for you and if you would like to nominate. More details about nominations and voting will be advised early in 2021 but if you have any questions please contact Jeff Dry 0408 254 489.

Ann Brown, Secretary Church Council and Congregation

Christmas Bowl

Christmas Bowl donation envelopes are available to pick up from the foyer of the church each Sunday. You can return them with cash any Sunday until the end of January or you can make a donation online. There is more information about the work of the Christmas Bowl as well as videos and stories on the website at www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl.

Friederike

Third Sunday of Advent

The joy of returning home

Today there are more than 60,000 Sri Lankan refugees in India. With the civil war over, many wish to return home to live in peace and freedom, and help rebuild their nation. Act for Peace's local partner, with your support, is helping returnees rebuild their lives by providing training and livelihood support to help families earn an income. **Please give today.**

CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 970 188

The Giving Tree

The Giving Tree is now in the church for donations of items to be distributed by Uniting Communities. You are invited to take a decoration off the tree, purchase the item listed on the back of the decoration and then place the item under the tree next week. Return the decoration to the tree if you remember and if possible take another one! Final day for donations will be Sunday 20th December.

Tear Fund Useful Gifts

Tear Fund Useful Gifts Catalogues and cards will be available at Church from Don and Brian from this Sunday until Dec 20. We have a great array of projects available to be supported as you give that special gift to friends and family at Christmas and at the same time express your solidarity with needy people and communities throughout the world. All the gifts in the catalogue contribute to long-term community development or advocacy programs that enable people to become self-sufficient. What a great privilege it is to be engaged in this ministry!

Messy Christmas 2020 is on December 13th 4-6 pm at Lovell Reserve

All invited for an afternoon of fun, faith and Christmas cheer! Bring along drinks and snacks to accompany the hot chicken we will provide for dinner and wear your best Christmas outfit!

Speak to Meg Edwards for more details

Stay and Play @ Home

Christmas is coming. Families have received their Christmas program and those who attended Wirra Play Day have made chains to decorate the native pine (*Callitris preissii*) by the old farm gate. The beautiful wool chain was made by Sharyn last year. Please add a chain to our tree if you would like.

Bruce and Joy Stewart



Christmas Lunch 2020

Sadly due to COVID19 we are unable to offer a community Christmas Lunch this year. After the great success of last year with our friends from the disability support group in Campbelltown, we thought it would be lovely if we could still provide something for them for Christmas Day. We are asking for donations of the following for 7 hampers: Tinned Salmon (John west 210g); Tinned peas, corn, carrot (425g cans); Tiny taters (canned edgell 822g); Individual Christmas puddings; Long life custard or cream; Tinned fruit (410g in JUICE); Jam; Biscuits and wrapped chocolates. You can also donate money if you would like to - either in an envelope or electronically - please mark it "Christmas Lunch", so that it gets to the right place. We would also like to include some knitted angels in the hampers and be able to share them in the community as well, for details and patterns please speak to Robyn Fry, Meg Edwards or Judi Foster. *Let's not let COVID19 overshadow the Christmas cheer!*

Next TOFS Tuesday 2nd February 2021

Mark your 2021 Diary for the next TOFS coffee and chat time on Tuesday 1st February 2021. More details will be in the newsletter closer to the date.

Sheralyn Robertson

Triple C's

Last Wednesday 15 Chaps turned out for Coffee and Chat, of the latter there was plenty. Next get together will be FEBRUARY 10th 2021. In the interim feel like a chat then pick up the phone and reach out to one of us.

Enjoy the upcoming holiday time and do not weigh b4 and after the "festival" season!!

Ray Walter

Food Donations to Uniting Communities

Food or cash donations for Uniting Communities Eastern Services Branch Emergency Relief Program are welcomed at any time. For more information contact Brenton Summers. Phone 0400 632 829.

Wider Church News

Wider church news: <https://sa.uca.org.au>

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

The New Times is available online as well at <https://sa.uca.org.au/new-times/new-times-print-edition/>

Wimala Presbytery News: <https://www.facebook.com/Wimala-Presbytery-109646960529095/>

Wimala Presbytery website: <https://wimala.ucasa.org.au/>

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) 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)

Lectionary readings

Refer to your Uniting Church Calendar for lectionary readings and key dates.

Church Bookings

Special Event or changes to regular bookings or location are highlighted in bold.

Day	Time	Location	Hirer/User
Saturday 12 th Dec	9.30 - 11.30 am	Lower hall	Pilates
Saturday 12th Dec	12.00 – 4.00 pm	Lower Hall	Private Function (Fry)
Sunday 13 th Dec	Evenings – 6.30 pm unless told otherwise, then can come later	Main building	VIP Cleaning Service
Monday 14 th Dec	6.30 - 8.30 pm	Lower hall	Pilates
Tuesday 15 th Dec	9.30 - 11.30 am	Lower hall	Pilates
Tuesday 15 th Dec	7.30 pm – 9.30 pm	TBC	Church Council Meeting
Wednesday 16 th Dec	9.30 - 10.30 am	Lower hall	Pilates
Thursday 17 th Dec	7.30 - 8.30 pm	Main auditorium	Worship Practice
Saturday 19 th Dec	9.30 - 11.30 am	Lower hall	Pilates
At all times	Clinic operates Mon-Thurs 12.30-5.30pm and Saturday mornings but top hall remains out of bounds at all other times	Top hall & Top carpark	Medical HQ

Reminder re activities in the church during Covid-19: In order to comply with COVID Marshal Requirements any activity held on site **must have** a covid marshal in attendance. The training can be completed at <https://marshal.clickontraining.com.au/>. The training should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete. Please notify Carol once you have finished the training and email the office a copy of your certificate of completion. Covid Marshall Badges are located in the cupboard in the vestry for you to wear, along with a hard-copy record of the COVID Marshal certificates, should you need to produce them during an inspection.

**Practice
Good
Hygiene**



Church Roster

	13th Dec	20th Dec
Prayer with Preacher	Jeff Dry	Ann Brown
Preacher	Sue Ellis	Sue Ellis
Worship Leader	Nola Pearce	Jeff Dry
Singers	Ann Brown Friederike Ashby-Weiss Marie Bartsch	Jeanine Dry Janet Luestner Sylvia Maywald
Sound	Don Brown	Noel Maywald
Data	Samantha Walker	David Walker
Chair Steward	Not needed	Not needed
Flowers	Raelene Anderson	Ruth Henderson
Building Steward	Noel Maywald	Paul Howland
Covid Marshall	Lee O'Connell	Jeff Dry
Door Greeter	Gus Robin Jan Robin	Coralie Summers Brenton Summers
Tick and Flick	Trevor Curtis	Trevor Curtis
Notices	Brenton Summers	Don Brown
Bible Reader	Ray Walter	Friederike Ashby-Weiss
Count Offering	Sylvia Maywald Glen Luestner	Friederike Ashby-Weiss Paul Howland
Communion Prep	-	-
Communion Server	-	-
Cleaning	VIP	VIP

Please swap with someone if you can't do the date you are assigned and if possible, please also notify the office of the change. It is very important during this pandemic that you do not attend services when you are unwell. Please swap with someone, or if late notice on the Sunday morning, then contact Sue Ellis (0427 162 009) or the worship leader for that service. Thank you.