



BELMONT UNITING CHURCH



28th November Weekly Newsletter 2021

2021 - THE YEAR OF HOPE

Worship At Home



Reflecting

Rev. Ian Brown

"Hope and expectation,... still!"

Happy New Year! In the Christian Calendar today is New Year's day. We begin again, looking to the coming of Christ. There's a lot of Christmas preparation, but the season of Advent has a very particular focus. And this year we have a very particular need for the hope and renewed sense of expectation the season offers us. I wonder what preparations you have started?

A few years ago I had the idea - a clever idea, I thought, that I could propagate some bromeliads and put them in nice pots as presents. If you know what a bromeliad is, just nod knowingly while I explain; they are something like a small, colourful flowering pineapple with no fruit, with rows of spikes on each leaf, the 'sharks teeth' of the gardening world!

I knew about this - but didn't have much time. I had the pots and the potting mix, I'd divide the clump and put it all together. I incurred a good scratching! - the next day my wrists were red and itching. I knew about what was coming, but I hadn't prepared! The point of Advent is to not be like "Ian in the garden," with the most important things of life!

Luke 21 is about the big picture signs of 'the Son of Man coming'; "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars, nature will be shaken, then you will see the son of man coming in a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to take place stand up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near."

It's awesome, vivid and poetic. It's strange, but it shouldn't be ignored! Rather than do something to these words perhaps we should let them do something to us!

Rich with the poetic language of apocalypse, it's a much misunderstood form of writing. It's about the revelation of God; ultimate things, the expected coming of God's reign. That's why we read it at the beginning of Advent.

Apocalypse focuses on ultimate justice and God's victory. Apocalyptic language is something Jesus used when he wanted to shake the foundations; when he saw the need to challenge and change, to jolt a few pews to wake people up. Because ultimately the gospel Jesus brings is radical, powerful and will effect everything and everyone! Changing the energy consumption patterns of the planet - a trifling matter next to this!

Jesus imagines the whole cosmos being turned on it's head. "Pray that you will either be able to escape or stand before him when he comes." Not the stuff of 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild'. It's not the sort of message to make faith seem nice and rational.

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If Christianity were that tame it would have died out soon after Jesus. No, this is serious and it makes most of us, who are comfortable, feel very uncomfortable. We mostly benefit from the way things are. Radical change is risky. But those who are on the bottom of the heap, the poor and oppressed of the world, those who have nothing to gain from things staying as they are, tremble with delight when they really hear about what, by God's grace might be.

What do we do to prepare during Advent?

How dramatic is the consequence of Jesus coming into our lives? Perhaps we can be honest about our need for Christ to shake and transform our lives and our world?

Christ is coming, coming to shake things up and set everything right! Coming unexpectedly; hope of the hopeless, healer of the incurable, redeemer of the world! This is the gospel in stark, bold truth. God is coming here, watch-out, TAKE HEED. Hope, Respond!

May this hope be something we grow to look forward to and respond to more and more.

May we prepare this Advent and always.

Keep the hope. Amen.



Blue Christmas Service:

A service of remembrance, comfort and hope.

Sunday 5th of December at 3.00pm

As a year comes close to its end, as we think about festivities to come, however they might look in this strange and disturbing year, we acknowledge that although many of us are filled with excitement and anticipation, for others, this can be a painful time.

As we emerge from the lockdowns, and upon reflection on our journey in the last two years, we are keenly aware of the impact COVID 19 has had in our lives. The anguish of broken relationships, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation – all these can make us feel very alone in the midst of this 'happy family time'. And for some of us, this is our first Christmas without our loved one.

We need space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. We need to know that we are not alone. We need to know that God is with us; Emmanuel.

Join with us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God is present with those who mourn, for those who grieve, for those who struggle. God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness.

All are welcome.

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Nov 28	10.00am	G. Coomber	Ros Buckwell	C. Rankin	R. Jeffers J. Jeffers	R. Ferguson	G. Schneider	L. Rankin
Nov 28		Communion	Flowers		Morning Tea	Covid Marshall - Ray		
		N/A	E. Richards		A. & R. Bunting M. Bullock			

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Dec 5	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	J. Ferguson	A. Merritt	E. Wood C. Schaller	B. Vaitohi	M. Richards	L. Rankin
Dec 5		Communion	Flowers		Morning Tea	Covid Marshall - Ray		
		Ros Buckwell, L. Jackson B. Couper, C. Collins	J. Kelly		R. Pearson L. Moss, A. Merritt			

Blue	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Christmas	3:00pm	Rev. Ikani	Fellowship Comm.	N/A	Fellowship Comm.	B. Vaitohi	C. Rankin	L. Rankin
		COVID Marshall	Bill Jennings		Afternoon Tea			
					Fellowship Committee			

Date	Time	Leader	Leader's Steward	Readers	Greeters & Ushers	PowerPoint	PA Operator	Organist
Dec 12	10.00am	Rev. Ikani	Ros Buckwell	I. Goodwin	H. McCann R. Ferguson	B. Vaitohi	R. Bunting	L. Rankin
Dec 12		Communion	Flowers		Morning Tea	Covid Marshall - Glen		
		N/A	J. Kelly		S. & B. Jennings M. Bullock			

Thank you to these willing people for keeping our Church services going. If you need to swap please endeavour to do so or if finding it difficult phone Julie 0418996592

Prayer Points For the Week

This Advent Season, pray for world peace; the peace which Jesus brought to earth which emphasises love, mercy, tolerance, forgiveness, love, compassion and understanding.

Loving God, we thank You that on this first Sunday in Advent we remember You caused a light to shine out of darkness. We pray that the Spirit of Christ may be born again within us and help us to glorify His nativity with hearts of love and compassion.

Dear Lord Jesus, help us to wait with patience and eager anticipation for Your return to earth. Guide us as we share our faith with others, letting them know of Your amazing love.

Lectionary Readings

Peter Woods

Nov 28 - Advent 1	Dec 5 - Advent 2	Dec 12 - Advent 3	Dec 19 - Advent 4
Jer 33: 14 - 16	Mal 3: 1 - 4	Zep 3: 14 - 20	Mic 5: 2 - 5
Psalms 25: 1 - 10	Lk 1: 68 - 79	Is 12: 2 - 6	Psalms 80: 1 - 7
1 Thes 3: 9 - 13	Phil 1: 3 - 11	Phil 4: 4 - 7	Heb 10: 5 - 10
Lk 21: 25 - 36	Lk 3: 1 - 6	Lk 3: 7 - 18	Lk 1: 39 - 45, (46 - 55)

Books Of The Bible

1. People who preside over courts. **Judges**
2. Wise sayings. **Proverbs**
3. Word with a similar meaning to alpha. **Genesis**
4. To fade out. **Peter**
5. The sections of a play. **Acts**
6. Only partly warm. **Luke**
7. Now said to bring or have bad luck. **Jonah**
8. Sought when unemployed. **Job**
9. Sobbing and wailings. **Lamentations**
10. They were ruled by the Caesars. **Romans**
11. Often taken for gold. **Micah**
12. What a Mathematician deals with. **Numbers**
13. To go out. **Exodus**
14. A foreign piece of money. **Mark**
15. There are not as many now. **Kings**
16. The first half of a harsh disposition. **Ruth (less)**

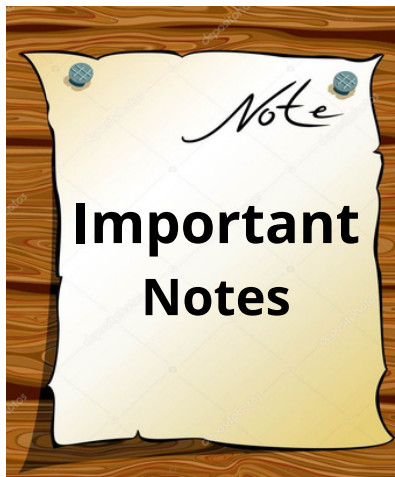
Thanks to Mary Thomas

CROSSLIGHT UPDATE

We seem to have lots of leftover Crosslights each issue.

If you no longer wish to receive a copy, would you please let Liz Moss know either at church or by contacting her on 0428 579 479 so that a new list can be compiled for Lloyd Yates.

Thanking you.



WELCOME MAT IS BACK

The Welcome Mat meets with others for friendship & company.

Every Friday from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. at Belmont Uniting Church We enjoy a cuppa and chat , then play games – Crazy Whist, Beetles, Hoy and Scrabble.

Lunch is at 12 noon.

The committee: Fay Harper, Muriel Bullock. Carl Schaller.

Belmont Uniting Church Evening Fellowship

Last Wednesday Nov 24th the ladies of this fellowship group thoroughly enjoyed their Annual General Meeting, usual monthly meeting for November and a Christmas Lunch. We gathered in the main hall that was decorated with a Christmas tree and many decorations including candles.

There was Christmas music playing and the tables had Christmas ornaments on them too. Everyone contributed food to share for the first time in two years. Yummy salads, chicken and ham and delicious desserts with lovely fruit juices and fresh bread rolls. Delightful!!

Beginning with our AGM President Julie Ferguson declared all positions vacant and then Ray Ferguson took the chair. On behalf of the Council Executive he thanked all members for a great year under trying circumstances and for our monetary contribution towards the new Church mower, screen and projector. Ray then held the election of officers for 2022 after which he was thanked with a small gift. Next we held our usual November meeting including annual reports by Julie, Secretary Loris Jackson and Treasurer Beryl Johns who was presented with a gold pen for her many many years of diligent service.

Devotions were with Jean Murray who took us on a journey down memory lane remembering special Christmas times.

At the conclusion of this meeting the delicious lunch and much fellowship was enjoyed by all, finishing with a cuppa and peppermint chocolate slice. Everyone brought a gift to the day so we all received a gift from the Christmas basket and the day concluded with a Christmas Quiz. Nola Woods then thanked Julie with a lovely poinsettia which was happily received.

All members then made light work of clearing away. All agreed it was a huge success and good food, fun and fellowship was enjoyed by all. Thank you ladies for a great year.

President Julie Ferguson



IMPORTANT NOTICE RE BANK TRANSFERS TO BUSHIKORI ACCOUNT

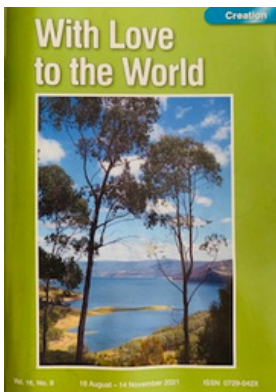
The BSB Number on the Bushikori Account listed for electronic transfers in the news letters in October was incorrect. It should read: 063858 10077253 (not 603858)

My sincere apologies for this error.
Bill Jennings.

LOOKING AHEAD

Sunday 28 November	- 10.00am ~ Advent 1	- Mr Glen Coomber
Sunday 5 December	- 10.00am ~ Advent 2 (Holy Communion)	- Rev Ikani
	3.00pm - Blue Christmas Service	- Rev Ikani
Sunday 12 December	- 10.00am ~ Advent 3	- Rev Ikani Vaitohi
Sunday 19 December	- 10.00am. ~ Advent 4	- Rev Ikani Vaitohi
	7.30 pm. - Christmas Carols Service	- OASIS Group
Friday 24 December	- 7.30pm - Christmas Eve Service	- Rev Ikani Vaitohi
Saturday 25 December	- 9.00am - Christmas Day Service.	- Rev Ikani Vaitohi
Sunday 26 December	- 9.00am - Christmas 1	- TBA

WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD 2022



It's that time again to decide if you want to order your 4 Copies of this excellent Australian system of reading the Bible with Commentaries to help with understanding.

You can order your own copies by calling the no. inside the back cover of your last Booklet OR Be part of the Bulk Orders by contacting Liz Main. 0439 450 707 or Liz64main@bigpond.com

Put \$24 in cash or cheque to WITH LOVE TO THE WORLD into an envelope. Write your name , address , and phone no. on or in it and give to me at church or drop it in my letter box before the New Year. OR Order App and read on-line.

Call me on the No. above if you have any other questions.....Shalom. Liz Main

CHRISTMAS CARDS SUPPORTING UNITING VIC/TAS have been ordered and hopefully will be available for purchase NEXT Sunday during morning tea. There will be 5 cards in each bundle @ \$5.50 per bundle, with 5 different designs to choose from. All 5 cards in each bundle will be the same. Please bring the correct notes/coins for your purchase. "The early bird catches the worm."

(A project of the Mission and Outreach Committee.)

Faith Sharing Group

The Faith Sharing Group meet every Tuesday at 10 am in the Church Hall. This group explores and discusses the weekly lectionary Bible readings, enjoying each other's insights and company with a cuppa beforehand.

All are warmly welcome.

Judith Briggs - has had successful heart by-pass surgery and is home after only 8 days. We continue to pray for her courage and comfort during this painful time and for a good recovery. We also pray for her family as they care for her. Love to all.

A Scone Morning Tea

A happy and very generous congregation enjoyed scones for morning tea last Sunday.

Alola Foundation received \$1,320 as a result of your generosity.

Seventeen one year scholarships will now be available to fund girls in Timore Leste to stay at school.

Thank you for your support.

Raye Pearson



Church Flowers

Thank you to all people who were happy to be rostered and have arranged church flowers during 2021. Due to restrictions not many of you received a turn! I've appreciated donations of garden flowers for funerals. I hope you are all available to be rostered in 2022.

Please contact me if you are unable to continue or have a preference for a certain time of year.

New rosters will start in Feb 2022. Elizabeth Wood 52412065 (NEW) Mob: 0427 131 000



Do face masks have to be worn at all times during worship?

Face masks are recommended to be worn indoors only in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained. This is even more important for events where the vaccination status of all attendees is not known.

As of 19/11/2021

Can we gather for morning tea afterwards?

Yes, providing all attendees are fully vaccinated.

As of 19/11/2021

Can we sing?

Yes.

Religious gatherings and ceremonies (incl Weddings and Funerals) –

- **If everyone present is fully vaccinated**, there are no capacity limits or density limits at places of worship for religious gatherings, weddings or funerals.
- **If vaccination status is not being checked** these events are restricted to one person per 4sqm up to a maximum of 50 people and refreshments cannot be served. For weddings, this cap does not include the marrying couple, celebrant or photographer. For funerals the cap does not include those required to conduct the funeral.
- **Masks** only required if social distancing cannot be maintained, especially if vaccination status is not being checked for all attendees aged over 12yrs.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Religious gatherings and ceremonies

- **If everyone present is fully vaccinated**, there are no capacity limits or density limits at places of worship.
- **If vaccination status is not being checked**, these events are restricted to one person per 4sqm up to a maximum of 50 people and refreshments cannot be served.
- **COVID check-in marshals** must ensure all attendees check-in and, if it is a service for the fully vaccinated, that all attendees over 12 years and 2 months have proof they are fully vaccinated or medically exempt. (see p4)



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA