



**“Church in the Trees” -Morisset Uniting**

## ***RUSTLING LEAVES***

***1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2020***

COVID 19 EDITION 7

**SUNDAY REFLECTIONS BY BARBARA DUFTY**

### GOD IN THE PANDEMIC

The prophet Hosea says the Lord leads his people into the desert to speak to their hearts. Over the past months it has sometimes felt like a desert experience as we continue our faith in isolation. And other questions arise: Where is God? And, what are his purposes in this time of the coronavirus.

God does not cause evil but he draws good from evil, and can even use it to deepen our faith.

The church was born in a time when epidemics were common. Dionysius, a bishop in the earliest years of Christianity, wrote “Out of the blue came this disease, a thing ... more frightening than any disaster whatever.”

Jesus came into our world as a healer. In every place he went, he brought the love of God to people who were blind and deaf, paralyzed and handicapped, epileptics and lepers, those afflicted with chronic pain and suffering. He moved through this world with his heart open in compassion and his hands



ready to serve others in love. He gave this model of love and service to his followers, both then and now. The first Christians, facing widespread diseases and illness, nursed the sick, buried the dead and consoled the grieving, often at great sacrifice and risk to their own lives.

There are saints being made in our present crisis. We may never know their names or stories but I know we will look back on these as days when many people acted with courage and performed extra acts of love and care for their neighbours. I am thinking not only of the doctors and nurses, or those who minister to the sick and dying. There are saints among us who go out of their way to offer help, who take the time to phone up those living alone, who share what they have when things are scarce. There are mothers and fathers who are keeping the hope of God alive for their children in the time of families in isolation. There are those who find a new nearness to God as life slows down and the busy-ness of regular routine is gone.

As we move gradually to begin meeting and worshipping together once more, we give thanks to God for all the unexpected blessings of the past months, and for his continuing presence with us all during this time.

Barbara Dufty

## **Did You see our church on TV?**

Recently Origin Energy made a commercial about their activity in the community. One of the activities they support is Meals on Wheels. The ad includes one of the Meals on Wheels deliverers in front of our church.

See the ad here.

The People of Origin- Powered by good energy

<https://youtu.be/uAMa2hIWkfs>

## **Pastoral Care Team**

The aim of pastoral care is to provide a system of care for those in *any kind of need* OR simply to have regular contact and/or friendship extended to all;

This should promote wholeness, endurance, reconciliation and/or encouragement

to assist each other to transcend the ups and downs of daily life; *and*

The congregation share the responsibility of pastoral care as members of “the Body of Christ.”

Do you remember the words of the song “RESPONSIBILITY” ?

*RESPONSIBILITY - that's the name of the ga-ame,*

*RESPONSIBILITY - that's why Jesus came,*

*YEA-EA, that's why Jesus came,*

*To teach us..... RESPONSIBILITY.*

We can share ideas, suggestions, enthusiasm, gifts or time to collectively provide an assurance to each other that we are not alone.

If you are in need of prayer support, please contact Rev. Joan Horgan Phone:0488 764698

**“Each life holds a UNIQUE purpose-  
Designed by God, fulfilled through Him, guided by His  
Word”**

*-Bonnie Jensen, DaySpring*

Stay well, stay safe, stay in touch with each other and God Bless.

We hope to see many of you in church on Sunday.

*Betty Small*

*Coordinator*

*PHONE: 49 733181*

## Connect in Prayer.

- ✓ Pray for the Mission to Seafarers as their people try to help ships' crews who are exhausted, mentally stretched, and unable to be relieved of their duties during this pandemic
- ✓ Our congregation as we begin to worship together, that we may all keep each other safe and rejoice in renewing our fellowship.
- ✓ Pray for those of our congregation who are unwell or in pain. Ask for God's comfort and reassurance that He is with them through their trials and that they may know His peace.
- ✓ Pray for families looking forward to the school holidays that, post Covid-19 lockdown they will be able to get out and about and enjoy rest and relaxation together.

## SLCEA

As you know from our last newsletter, Scripture in schools will start again at the beginning of term 3. We support Southlakes Christian Education Association (SLCEA) through the OP Shop and with a retiring offering on the first Sunday of each Month. Although our first service back will be July 5<sup>th</sup>, we have decided not to have a retiring offering on that day for SLCEA. We will be back to normal soon so keep an ear out for developments

**Stop Press:** *SRE classes will recommence at the beginning of Term 3. Praise God for answered prayer regarding resumption of SRE lessons. However we are now 3 teachers short so if you know any one who might be interested, contact Cathie Smythe or John Cox [slicea2@gmail.com](mailto:slicea2@gmail.com).*

## Lent Event

Those with money in their Lent Event jars which were handed out in March, could you bring them in this week, Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July and we will dedicate them during the service. 4

## **We're Back. Hope to See You Soon**

With the pandemic under control in NSW we have decided to return to our regular church services as of this Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July. That is not to say that everything returns to normal

This is what we will do this Sunday and each week till the virus is no longer a threat to our community.

- ✓ chairs, door handles and other areas will be disinfected prior to and after each service.
- ✓ Social distancing will be practised both in the seating and with entering and leaving the premises.
- ✓ We will skip morning tea to start off with although it is a high priority and efforts will be made in the near future.
- ✓ We will need to record who attends and keep that record for 28 days as a safety precaution. Therefore there will be only 1 entrance for everyone. (2 exits will permit quicker and safer departure.)
- ✓ Hand sanitizer will be available at the front door.
- ✓ The offering will be a retiring offering to cut down on movement in the church and handling the bags.
- ✓ Singing is deemed to increase the risk of spreading germs so we will be using our musicians and recorded singing to start off with.

Join us this Sunday as Bruce Edgell leads us in worship and conducts Holy Communion, in a slightly different way.

*While we encourage you all to join us this Sunday, some may not want to compromise their health and may wish to delay their return for a bit longer, or after the coldest part of winter has passed. We respect your decision and look forward to seeing you back in church again later.*

## Other Church Activities

**Op Shop;** Due to narrow aisles social distancing is not possible so will be closed for a bit longer.

**Red Dove Choir.** Unfortunately singing is not permitted as it heightens the possible spread of viruses. It would appear they will be out of action for a while still.

**Ladies Fellowship** are planning to meet soon. Stay tuned

**Connections** A small group of us travelled to d'Albora Marine Nelson Bay. After the obligatory Covid-19 cleansing and sign in, we boarded Moonshadow cruise's "Hinchinbrook Explorer" and sailed around 10:00am. The vessel was licenced for 260 passengers - but only carrying around 50 due to Covid regulations, Day was cool, bright and sunny, with light wind and a slight swell. Escorted by local dolphins we cleared Fingal light and headed north toward Brampton Island. We soon picked up a pair of whales a little further out to sea. Although we came reasonably close, they appeared to just ambling along, so the skipper took us further north where we came across another pair who were more active, with more water spouts sighted towards Broughton Island and further out to sea. Over about half an hour the pair surfaced, spouted, showed their backs (bobs) and tails and occasionally breached. One breached close across the bows, giving us spectacular views.

When the whales tired of entertaining us, the skipper headed for home via "Boondelbar" Island & nature reserve. Manoeuvring almost up to the cliff face, we visited a fur seal colony before heading home, entertained on the way by a pod of dolphins. Lunch was either on-board fish-'n-chips or at West Diggers Nelson Bay, more Covid19 regulations, but only a hand full of people in the dining room.

## Outside hirers;

Most have suggested they want to return ASAP. Once they have filled in a COVID 19 Safety Plan they are ready to go.

We have a large number of outside groups that use our facilities on a regular basis including,

Emmaus Community district committee	Frustrations Card group A.A
Ladies' Probus	Painting
Stamp Club	U3A classes
Exercise group	and a new Yoga group starting soon

## Book Review by Bob Starling

### 'Christ Above All' by Daniel Shayesteh

The writer of this book was once a practising Muslim and an academic. In comparing the teachings of Islam, Buddhism, Secular Humanism, Communism and Christianity, he comes to the conclusion that Christianity is different from all other religions and belief systems in several key areas and so he converted to follow Christianity.

Shayesteh then compares Islam and Christianity arguing that the God of Islam, Allah, created sin and challenges people during their life to do good things to avoid sin and on their death they will go to hell where they will be judged and left in hell or rise to heaven to be with Allah.

On the other hand the Christian God hates sin, which was created by Satan, and His love for mankind gives us the certainty that we will go to heaven.

Shayesteh also makes reference to other major differences between the religions including the authenticity of the Bible vs the Quran, one's freedom of choice, the authority to kill others to name but a few. The second half of the book is a conversation in the form of letter writing between himself and a Muslim mosque leader where the two men examine the different cultures and Shayesteh argues the truth of Christianity and the irrational burdens of Islam.

In a footnote it is revealed the Muslim man after a period of time withdrew from leadership within his mosque. He was ostracised until it was no longer physically safe for him to remain in the district where he lived having been threatened with death. So he moved and remains a strong Christian.

With his detailed knowledge of Islam, Daniel Shayesteh was able to engage with this person over a period of time and convince him with reasoned argument that Christianity is the only true religion. He encourages others to engage with non Christians to help them see the Truth.

## Just for fun

This week our jokes are about children.

The child comes home from his first day at school. Mother asks, "What did you [learn](#) today?"

The kid replies, "Not enough. I have to go back tomorrow."

\*\*\*\*

One day, the [phone](#) rang, and a little [boy](#) answered.

"May I speak to your [parents](#)?"

"They're busy."

"Oh. Is anybody else there?"

"The [police](#)."

"Can I speak to them?"

"They're busy."

"Oh. Is anybody else there?"

"The [firemen](#)."

"Can I speak to them?"

"They're busy."

"So let me get this straight -- your parents, the police, and the firemen are there, but they're all busy? What are they doing?"

"Lookin for me."

