

# PIONEER VALLEY UNITING CHURCHES

Mission Statement: *Sharing Christ in Walkerston, Mirani, Eungella*



*'The Window'*

Fourth Sunday of



*22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2020*

**Please note there will be no Worship Services in the Pioneer Valley Uniting Churches until further notice.**

**Please take a moment to read the attached letter from the Moderator, Rev David Baker.**

18 March 2020

Dear friends,

Greetings in the name of Christ.

As you are well aware, our society and our church are being deeply impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The situation is extremely fluid and evolving rapidly in terms of both Government policy and public health advice.

As members of the wider community, and as the body of Christ called to exercise love for our neighbours, we are committed to participating in our society in wise, faithful and responsible manner. We have our part to play both in limiting the spread of the disease itself, and in helping our wider community learn new ways of caring for one another in a time of emotional, physical and financial stress.

I'm equally aware that the consequences of this pandemic may well be felt by our own members, ministry leaders, staff and volunteers. I am praying for you and want to express by commitment to standing in solidarity with you. Please follow all Government and public health advice with respect to your own practices and behaviours.

I am also very conscious of the significant impact of the current situation on health care workers in particular, as well as those in industries experiencing significant disruption. I ask you to be in prayer, as well as offering practical support wherever possible to those in such situations.

In times like this, we often ask the question, "Where is God in all of this?". It's often a statement of exasperation, or fear. Yet we can answer that conclusively; "God is with us!" and we can draw strength and courage from God's presence. We can be generous and confident for others. We can be a safe space, a healing space. We can bear witness to the goodness of God in Jesus Christ, for our lives are hidden in Christ

### **Advice current Wednesday 18 March 2020**

As far as practical measures go, I can advise the following as of today (18 March 2020):

- After consultation with presbytery leaders, face-to-face congregational worship services and meetings should cease effective immediately. This is in accordance with new limits of 100 people in an indoor gathering announced by the Prime Minister this morning, and with further limitations signalled to be applied by the end of the week. You should comply with this advice and work on alternate means of connecting people for worship, prayer and discipleship gatherings.
- Leadership team meetings, church council meetings, small group and home group meetings in face-to-face format may continue at your discretion in the short term with stringent hygiene and social distancing practices, but Government and public health advice should be monitored regularly. We recommend you prepare for the cessation of such gatherings in a face-to-face format and move to different modes of connecting.
- Public children and youth events and activities should cease consistent with our commitment to love our neighbours. The potential for asymptomatic people to unknowingly contribute to the spread of disease is very real.
- Visits to aged care centres, and hospitals can continue, but in accordance with the stringent new measures announced by the Prime Minister this morning. Visits will be short, visitor numbers strictly limited, and as you may imagine, personal hygiene practices will be vital. Please comply with any policy or practices at centres or hospitals you visit. Your own health and safety are important to me, and to our church.
- The Government has advised upgraded international travel advice to "Do Not Travel". Domestic travel is currently ok, with limits on travel into indigenous communities.

I recognise that implementing these measures will have significant impact on the life of our church and community. I want to encourage you to apply your own creative thinking, prayer and planning, to different ways of connecting, encouraging and equipping people to love and care for their neighbours. In addition to your own work, further resources will be available from your Presbyteries, and from the Synod shortly, and on an ongoing basis. I invite you to share any insights, ideas or practices that your community implements in order to help share best practice across the church.

More than anything, look after yourself during this unprecedented time. If you are struggling, reach out to someone you trust, contact Lifeline on 13 11 44 or access the Employee Assistance Provider, ChangeFutures on (07) 3857 0847.

As well as further communication direct to you from the Synod office, I will make a public statement later today expressing the Uniting Church's commitment to stand in solidarity with our community, and with those most vulnerable at this most difficult time.

Should you be able to contribute suggestions, or want to seek further advice, please contact the Synod workplace health and safety team at [health.safety@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:health.safety@ucaqld.com.au). Alternatively, information is available from the below sources.

Australian Government

Queensland Health

Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

My friends let us continue to love God, love one another and love our neighbours.

Rev David Baker

Moderator

Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

### **Take the time to read the Devotions below:**

#### **Ephesians 5:8-14 New International Version (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

<sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

<sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord.

<sup>11</sup> Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

<sup>12</sup> It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

<sup>13</sup> But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.

<sup>14</sup> This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

**Discipleship Thought:** The writer of the book of Micah tells us we must, “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.” Why do you think the writer of Ephesians tells readers to, “Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord”?

It might be that what is pleasing to the Lord is hidden from us. It might also be that we clutter our lives with so much that we are told should be pleasing to us that we can't easily see what is truly pleasing. What do we need to ignore or clear away in order to be able to find what is pleasing to the Lord? How will seeking what is pleasing to God change us and our faith communities?

**Prayer:** *Guiding God, you invite us into your experience of your world every day.*

*In every moment we can see the patterns of your creation, the way every creature and element finds its rhythm in you.*

*We thank you that we too are a part of the great turning of the earth, that we too belong here and take our place.*

*For all that is and all we are we give you thanks and praise. Amen*



Each week during Worship we pray for families from our congregations. Remember to uphold one another in prayer.

....Alan & Thelma, Aaron, Janet, Sinead, Finn, Oscar and Emlyn, Lyn and family, Peter & Margaret.

....**those receiving or recovering from medical treatment** – Carl, Richard, Len, Rev Nathan, Debbie, Ray, Irene, Stephen's father, Earl, Ruth.

....for the safety of medical staff members across the world as they provide medical treatment for those who have been in contact with the corona virus and **pray for** those who have contracted the disease and for those who are recovering.

....**Ian and Lynn** in their missionary work.

....**Parish Elders** - Bruce, Beth, Morelle, Sam, Colleen and Lyn.

....**individuals and families** who are feeling sad and lonely, the homeless and for those who have lost their jobs.

....**new families** to join our Congregations.

....**Sara & Craig** as they prepare for the birth of their second child.

....**an abundance of finances for our Parish.**

....**members of our Church Council and Property Committee.**

....**Friends, Family and Members of the Parish** who are travelling.

....**safety in the workplace.**

....**Reach Out Activities.**

....**those who are being affected by the violence in our community, in our nation and all over the World.**

....the members of **Local, State and Federal Governments.**

....for the **emergency services members** and for the **counsellors** who care for the communities in crisis and disaster situations.

....**Scripture Union Queensland, Bible Society, Frontier Services** and **School Chaplaincy**.

give  
thanks  
IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

for....**Pastor Allen Soxsmith, Moderator - Rev David Baker, Rev Suzy Sitton** who is the **Interim CQ Presbytery Minister**.

....**our families and friends** and for the **freedom** we take for granted in our Country.

....**Teachers, RI Instructors, School Chaplains** and all those who work with children.

....**Lay Preachers** and **Retired Ministers** who give of their time and talents conducting **Worship Services** across the **Mackay District**.

....the many blessings we receive in our daily lives.

....the joy children and grandchildren bring to our families.

**A Little Humour:** 😊



**Week 4:** In a few weeks we'll commemorate the first anniversary of the Christchurch Massacre – a tragic reminder of the hatred, intolerance and misunderstanding in our communities, but also of the beauty of people pulling together to bring solace and solidarity. Today we meet three old friends – a mix of Muslim and Christian women for whom friendship across faith boundaries has proved rich and lifegiving. Do you know people of other faiths with whom you could have a meal and develop stronger relationships?

**Mottos for Success:** Give of yourself wherever and whenever possible. Give a reassuring look and a warm smile. Provide a listening ear. Lend a helping hand. Do a kind deed. Pray a caring prayer. Speak an encouraging word.

**Monday Morning Prayer with Moderator Rev David Baker:** As we take up our Lenten Journey again, Lord, may we be drawn closer to you, and be freed of that which would ensnare our Faith, Hope, and Love. Amen

**Prayer:** Thank You, Lord, for Your promise that if I am true to You, You will take care of me and I will produce good fruit. What I cannot do on my own, You will accomplish, if I trust in You. Amen

Zander Noy (today)  
 Jenny McFarlane (today)  
 Estrellita Gargano (24<sup>th</sup>)



HAPPY  
 ANNIVERSARY!

Ray & Bill Creese (26<sup>th</sup>)



The Passion Play

## S.H.I.N.E – (Seeking Him In Everything) For the youth and young at heart

The man born blind told the Pharisees, "One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." In our worship today let us ask Jesus to help us see.

**Story:** In this interesting story about the man born blind, it's clear that the man's parents have no wish to see. Although they know that their son has been blind all his life and can now see, they refuse to acknowledge Jesus as the one who has healed him. It's very easy to refuse to acknowledge the truth - to refuse to see - because of fear, as this little story illustrates.

**Kit** - The first thing Kit felt after he was born, was his mother's warm, raspy tongue grooming him. Like all new-born kittens, Kit could neither see nor hear, but he could feel and he could smell. He immediately knew the smell and the feel of his mother and he loved to feel her tongue lick, lick, licking at his coat.

Kit was always hungry and relied on his mother for food. When he'd finished eating, he would curl into a tiny ball and fall fast asleep. Usually when he awoke his mother was there, ready to feed him, but occasionally she was absent, and then Kit felt very anxious indeed.

As he grew older and bigger, Kit began to wander around the cave. He didn't wander far, but he had a great curiosity and wanted to find out about his surroundings. So he would wander and sniff and lick and touch.

One day Kit wandered a little farther than usual. He didn't know how far he was from the mouth of the cave because he was still too small for his eyes to be able to see, but he had an inbuilt homing instinct and knew he would be

able to find his way back. But he still couldn't hear, so he missed his mother's alarmed screech of terror and her plaintive "miaow" as a large fox pounced upon her.

When Kit returned, he sniffed and cried and licked and felt, but he couldn't find his mother. He was tired, so he curled up into his little ball and fell asleep, sure that his mother would be there as usual when he awoke. But when he awoke cold and hungry some hours later, his mother was still missing.

Kit knew he would have to find food for himself and he also knew that his mother went outside to find food. But he was very frightened. He had no idea what it was like outside. Then, by some kind of miracle, Kit discovered that he was beginning to hear sounds. And at almost the same time, he began to see shapes.

Over the next day or two his sight and his hearing grew strong, but as he became hungrier and hungrier so he became more and more frightened.

Suddenly, although he could now see and hear perfectly, Kit discovered that he really didn't want to see or hear. It was much more comfortable to pretend to himself that he couldn't go outside because he couldn't see or hear. It was much more comfortable when his mother looked after him and he didn't have to worry about anything. Kit had a feeling that the world outside was very big and terrifying, waiting to gobble him up. He didn't want to see it. And he didn't want to hear it, either.

But in the end he became so hungry that he had no choice. He had to venture outside. For a moment he stood in fear with his little nose twitching and his little whiskers quivering. But then his newly opened eyes caught sight of a movement in the grass at his feet and without thinking, Kit sprang. He caught his first mouse and he found that it tasted delicious.

Kit was very pleased with himself, and after that, he was very glad indeed that he could see.

**Blessing:** May the Lord our God open eyes that are blind and ears that are deaf. May the Lord our God strengthen feeble knees and faint hearts. And may the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now, be in your homes and in your families and with all those whom you love and for whom you pray, now and always. Amen.

**March Income \$2220.59**

**March Expenditure \$8910.80**

**St Andrew's – April - Holy Communion Elements – Colleen Brown**

**St Andrew's - May - Holy Communion Elements – Kerith Noy**

**Combined Churches Fundraiser** which is to be held on **Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2020 at 9.30am** in St John's Church Hall. Mark your calendars NOW!

Iona West is having a Pie and Lamington Drive. If you are interested in buying some, please contact Andrea Nicholson (0487 100 268) or Iona West Office (07 4951 3869). Pies \$8.50 ea: Lamingtons \$11.50 per doz: Peach Squares \$13.00 per doz: Thank you for your support.



**Contact Details: P.O. BOX 152, WALKERSTON 4751**

**Website:** [www.pioneervalleyunitingchurch.org.au](http://www.pioneervalleyunitingchurch.org.au)

**Email:** [allensox42@gmail.com](mailto:allensox42@gmail.com) or [glen.noy@bigpond.com](mailto:glen.noy@bigpond.com)



**Minister:** Pastor Allen Soxsmith

**Phone Number:** 07 4959 3974



*EUNGELLA*

**Elders:** Beth Higham 4958 3158: Morelle Coxwell 4959 1229: Bruce Kerr 4966 6924: Lynette Gargano 4951 4075: Colleen Brown 4954 5470: Sam Fernando 4959 3298

**Containers for Change**

ANYTHING ENVIRONMENTAL, 19 INTERLINK COURT, PAGET.

Parish's Registered Number **C10195946**

**Electronic Banking Details are as follows**

*UCA Pioneer Valley – ANZ Bank - BSB: 014-010*

*Account No: 211557247. Please enter your surname OR Walkerston, Mirani or Eungella in the payment description*

**Newsletter: Kerith Noy:** 07 4959 2328: **email:** [glen.noy@bigpond.com](mailto:glen.noy@bigpond.com) or P O Box 346, Walkerston Q 4751

**Prayer Warrior: Vicki Kiem: Mob:** 0408 767 331:

**email:** [vakmoss@gmail.com](mailto:vakmoss@gmail.com)

7.40am-7.55am – St Andrew's Vestry – Sundays

**Lectionary Readings:**

**22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2020 - Lent 4 - 1 Samuel 16:1-13: Psalm 23: Ephesians 5:8-14: John 9:1-41**

**29<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 – Lent 5 - Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45**

**5<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 - Palm Sunday - Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 118:1-2,19-29; Philemon 2:5-11; Matthew 21:1-11**

**10<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 – Good Friday - Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1 – 19:42**

**12<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 – Easter Day - Acts 10:34-43 or Jeremiah 31:1-6; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4 or Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18 or Matthew 28:1-10**

**CCLi 142833**