



The Messenger

South Mandurah Uniting Church's Weekly Newsletter

Welcome to our Sunday Service of worship, commencing at **9-30am** every Sunday



Advent 1

3 December 2023

Welcome: Keith & Jaren Picking
 Flowers: Barbara Smith
 Coffee/Tea: Lynsay & Jenny Dunning
 Reader: Sue Lawrence
 Kids Church: Anita Alberastine
 Church Rep: Raelyn Punch
 Worship Leader: Piet Speyers
 Speaker: Yoy Alberastine

Advent 2

10 December 2023

Welcome: John & Sue Lawrence
 Flowers: Sue Lawrence
 Coffee/Tea: Keith & Jaren Picking
 Reader: Sherryl Smith
 Kids Church: Jan Fawcett
 Church Rep: Sherryl Smith
 Worship Leader: Yoy Alberastine
 Speaker: Rev. Mike Fawcett (Communion)



Readings from the Lectionary

Is 64:1-9
 Ps 80:1-7, 17-19
 1 Cor 1:3-9
 Mk 13:24-37

Is 40:1-11
 Ps 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Pt 3:8-15a
 Mk 1:1-8



South Mandurah Uniting Church

2-4 Rees Place Wannanup
 PO Box 5290 FALCON WA 6210

Website: <https://southmandurah.ucwa.au>

For pastoral needs please contact Rev. Mike Fawcett M: 0412 243 677

E: fawcettmichael176@gmail.com

Or any member of the Leadership Team

Pastor: Yoy Alberastine M: 0421 793 562 E: yoyea1210@gmail.com

Leadership Team Chair: Raelyn Punch 0429 685 908 E: prpunch@lasar.net.au
 Editor of the Messenger: Peter Punch 0427 685 908 E: prpunch@lasar.net.au
 Prayer Circle Leader: Frances Davy 0488 906 280 E: 2davyfamily@gmail.com

Members of the Leadership Team: Raelyn Punch, Sherryl Smith & Andrew Telfer

Halls Head Bendigo Bank details for electronic transfers:

A/C Name: Uniting Church in Australia-South Mandurah Congregation
 BSB: 633-000 A/C No: 117072207

It is optional whether you include your name as a reference for the payment.



Our Vision: "United in Christ we reach out to build loving relationships that deepen faith and enrich lives."

Packed & Ready

The word "maranatha" is a Syriac expression that means: "our Lord comes." It was used as a greeting in the early church. When believers gathered or parted, they didn't say "hello" or "goodbye" but "Maranatha!" If we had the same upward look today, it would revolutionize the church. O that God's people had a deepening awareness of the imminent return of the Saviour!



While on a South Pole expedition, British explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton left a few men on Elephant Island, promising that he would return. Later, when he tried to go back, huge icebergs blocked the way. But suddenly, as if by a miracle, an avenue opened in the ice and Shackleton was able to get through. His men, ready and waiting, quickly scrambled aboard. No sooner had the ship cleared the island than the ice crashed together behind them. Contemplating their narrow escape, the explorer said to his men, "It was fortunate you were all packed and ready to go!" They replied, "We never gave up hope. Whenever the sea was clear of ice, we rolled up our sleeping bags and reminded each other, 'The boss may come today.'"

The hymn writer Horatius Bonar exhorted us "to be ready for the last moment by being ready at every moment...so attending to every duty that, let Him come when He may, He finds the house in perfect order, awaiting His return." The trumpet may sound anytime. How important for us as Christians to be "packed and ready to go!"

As you leave home today, don't say goodbye say "Maranatha!"

Our Daily Bread

WELCOME

A very warm welcome is extended to any visitors. We trust that you will be blessed during this time of worship and invite you to fellowship with us after the service.



'Twas the Beginning of Advent



'Twas the beginning of Advent and all through the Church
Our hope was all dying we'd given up on the search.
It wasn't so much that Christ wasn't invited,
But after 2,000 plus years we were no longer excited.

Oh, we knew what was coming no doubt about that.
And that was the trouble it was all "old hat."
November brought the first of an unending series of pains
With carefully orchestrated advertising campaigns.

There were gadgets and dolls and all sorts of toys.
Enough to seduce even the most devout girls and boys.
Unfortunately, it seemed, no one was completely exempt
From this seasonal virus that did all of us tempt.

The priests and prophets and certainly the kings
Were all so consumed with the desire for "things!"
It was rare, if at all, that you'd hear of the reason
For the origin of this whole holy-day season.

A baby, it seems, once had been born
In the mid-east somewhere on that first holy-day morn.
But what does that mean for folks like us,
Who've lost ourselves in the hoopla and fuss?

Can we re-learn the art of wondering and waiting,
Of hoping and praying, and anticipating?
Can we let go of all the things and the stuff?
Can we open our hands and our hearts long enough?

Can we open our eyes and open our ears?
Can we find him again after all of these years?
Will this year be different from all the rest?
Will we be able to offer him all of our best?

'Twas the Beginning of Advent (Continued)

So many questions, unanswered thus far,
As wise men seeking the home of the star.
Where do we begin how do we start
To make for the child a place in our heart?

Perhaps we begin by letting go
Of our limits on hope, and of the stuff that we know.
Let go of the shopping, of the chaos and fuss,
Let go of the searching, let Christmas find us.

We open our hearts, our hands and our eyes,
To see the king coming in our own neighbours' cries.
We look without seeking what we think we've earned,
But rather we're looking for relationships spurned.

With him he brings wholeness and newness of life
For brother and sister, for husband and wife.
The Christ-child comes not by our skill,
But rather he comes by his own Father's will.

We can't make him come with parties and bright trees,
But only by getting down on our knees.
He'll come if we wait amidst our affliction,
Coming in spite of, not by our restriction.

His coming will happen of this there's no doubt.
The question is whether we'll be in or out.
"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."
Do you have the courage to peer through the lock?

A basket on your porch, a child in your reach.
A baby to love, to feed and to teach.
He'll grow in wisdom as God's only Son.
How far will we follow this radical one?

He'll lead us to challenge the way that things are.
He'll lead us to follow a single bright star.
But that will come later if we're still around.
The question for now: Is the child to be found?

Can we block out commercials, the hype and the malls?
Can we find solitude in our holy halls?
Can we keep alert, keep hope, stay awake?
Can we receive the child for ours and God's sake?

From on high with the carolling host as he sees us,
He yearns to read on our lips the prayer: Come Lord Jesus!
As Advent begins all these questions make plea.
The only true answer: We will see, we will see.



First Advent Sunday: Prayer for Hope

Heavenly Father, Advent is a time for remembering and reflecting on the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Father, I pray that you will turn our hearts toward you as Christmas approaches. Let us not get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season this year and miss the chance to celebrate the gifts of hope, peace, joy, love, that you sent to us on that first Christmas.



Father God, every word in scripture points to the gift of hope that we have because of Christ Jesus. The Christmas story wasn't the beginning of that message of hope because the Old Testament is full of glimpses of your plan to redeem your people and restore them into a relationship with you, but we are able to truly begin to see and understand just how great your love for us is when we read the story of Jesus' birth in scripture.

You showed us a glimmer of hope as you chose to send your Son into this earth through a family tree that was a little bent and scarred. We glanced it again as you chose a tribe that was small and a city that was lowly. It can be seen when we recognize that you don't send your Son to be birthed in a fancy palace among the wealthy and the elite, but our King of Kings and Lord of Lords was born among common shepherds and livestock in a barn. The family wasn't ideal. The surroundings weren't grand. The situation wasn't without its difficulties. However, you came in the midst of all of that. Emmanuel. God with us. God in the messy. God in the fallen world. God in the difficult and the troubled.

Your plan to redeem and restore mankind was to dwell among us, fully God and fully man. You chose to come to earth enrobed in the fragile, soft skin of a newborn baby and set aside all of the glory of heaven for one purpose. You came to be with us. You came to love us. You came to die for us so that we might live.

Help us to see that you are with us. Nothing is too difficult, too messy, or too dirty for you. Jesus came to give us the gift of eternal life through the salvation that only you, our Heavenly Father, can give when we believe in your Son, repent of our sins, and confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

That first Christmas, you gave us the gift of hope wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Thank you, Father, for your immeasurable gift. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. **Amen.**

www.ibelieve.com/faith/advent-prayers-week-one-the-hope-of-advent.html (edited)

Coffee, Cake & Fellowship

Ladies: Christmas Luncheon 12pm Wednesday 6th December
at the Mei Jing Chinese Restaurant, 93 Mandurah Terrace.
Check details in previous Messengers.



Gentlemen: Espresso - 9-30am Tuesday 5th December
and every fortnight at the Taste of Italy Café, Peelwood Parade, Halls Head.

For more information please contact Peter M: 0427 685 908 or Raelyn Punch
M: 0429 685 908, E: prpunch@lasar.net.au

Christmas Eve Service

There will be a special Christmas Eve Service held on **Sunday 24th December 2023**, led by Yoy Alberastine. Everyone is welcome, so invite your family, friends and neighbours.



There will be the opportunity for fellowship from **6pm**, over a cuppa and a piece of Christmas Cake.

The service will be from 6-30 to 7-30pm, followed by light refreshments. The church will remain open after the service for quiet reflection.

1st Quarter 2024 Enablers' List

We know everyone is busy at this time of the year but please pause for a few minutes and email Peter your availability for the 1st January to 31st March 2024 Enablers' List at prpunch@lasar.net.au by **5pm Friday 15th December 2023**.



If you haven't been on the Enablers' List previously, or have taken a break from the List, please join in.

For those who are unsure what the Enablers are; they are the volunteers who help during the Sunday services in a variety of roles including welcoming at the door, flowers, morning teas, reading the scriptures, Sunday school and more. You can get more information from any of the Leadership Team.

Please also consider joining our wonderful musicians, whether as a singer or playing an instrument. For more information contact Ken at M: 0417 955 149 or E: kenneth.lehmann@bigpond.com

Pastoral Care

For pastoral care or spiritual guidance please contact:



Rev. Mike Fawcett
M: 0412 243 677
E: fawcettmichael176@gmail.com

OR Any member of the leadership team
(their names are overleaf)



Jan Fawcett Wednesday 6 December
God Bless and warm wishes
To you upon your birthday

Saturdays with Yoy

Yoy is at our church the first and second Saturday of every month from 9am to midday or by appointment in the afternoons. He would welcome the opportunity to share a time of prayer or a chat over a cup of coffee with you. You can be contacted via email: yoyea1210@gmail.com or M: 0421 793 562.

