

5 January 2025



# The Messenger

South Mandurah Uniting Church's Weekly Newsletter

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



*Wise Men Still Seek Him*

## Called to Obey Love

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was a Danish philosopher and theologian who is widely regarded as the father of existentialism. Kierkegaard espoused what he regarded as a more genuine form of Christianity based on the first three centuries after Christ's crucifixion. Much of his writing focused on the concepts of God and Love. In one of his fables he writes about a king who fell in love with a maid. When asked, "How shall I declare my love?" his counsellors answered, "Your majesty has only to appear in all the glory of your royal glory before the maid's humble dwelling and she will instantly fall at your feet and be yours."



But it was precisely that which troubled the king. He wanted her glorification, not his. In return for his love he wanted hers, freely given. Finally, the king realized love's truth, that freedom for the beloved demanded equality with the beloved. So late one night, after all the counsellors of the palace had retired, he slipped out a side door and appeared before the maid's cottage dressed as a servant.

Clearly, the fable is a Christmas story. We are called to obey not God's power, but God's love. God wants not submission to his power, but in return for his love, our own.

God moved in. He pitches his fleshly tent in silence on straw, in a stable, under a star. The cry from that infant's throat pierced the silence of centuries. God's voice could actually be heard coming from human vocal cords.

That's the joy of it. God has come to be with us!

James T. Garrett, *God's Gift*, CSS Publishing Company (Edited)

## Christmas 2 5 January 2025



Welcome: Peter & Raelyn Punch  
Flowers: Peter Punch  
Coffee/Tea: Raelyn Punch & Cynthia Falconer  
Reader: Peter Hyde  
Kids Church: Raelyn Punch  
Music: Jim McWhinnie  
Church Rep: Rev. Mike Fawcett  
Worship Leader: Piet Speyers  
Speaker: Rev. Mike Fawcett

## Baptism of Jesus 12 January 2025

Welcome: Keith & Jaren Picking  
Flowers: Sue Lawrence  
Coffee/Tea: Keith & Jaren Picking  
Reader: Judy Law  
Kids Church: Kerry Lawson  
Music: Jim McWhinnie  
Church Rep: Rev. Mike Fawcett  
Worship Leader: John Lawrence  
Speaker: Rev. Mike Fawcett (Communion)



### Readings from the Lectionary

Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Ps 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Is 43:1-7  
Ps 29  
Acts 8:14-17  
Lk 3:15-17, 21-22



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Members of the Leadership Team: Rev. Mike Fawcett, Ps. Yoy Alberastine, Kerry Lawson, Sherryl Smith, Andrew Telfer & Raelyn Punch

### 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."*

## Closing the Chasm

Many years ago, I was walking in the farm that has belonged to my father's family in Dardanup for many generations, and I happened to look down and I saw this large ant hill. As I have an interest in all things natural I carry a small magnifying glass in my pocket. As I stared through it I realising there must have been thousands of these little creatures scurrying back and forth. It was a world unto itself. As I looked down I thought to myself, given the capacity of an ant, they have no way of understanding something as big and complex as a human being. If they were aware of me at all, I must have loomed over them as some kind of ominous presence. Then it dawned on me that if I had the power to somehow become an ant and yet take into that new condition as much of the reality of a human being as would be possible - in other words, if I could cross this chasm of otherness from my side - then it would be possible for ants to understand the human in ways that they could never have known before.

As I walked away, I began to realize that the chasm between an ant and a human being, vast as it is, is nothing to compare between the chasm between a human being and this mysterious, divine reality that gives life. And I realized that we are incapable of understanding God on our own as an ant would be incapable of understanding us.

John Claypool, *God Became What We Are* (Edited)



## A Prayer for Hope

Dear God, Thank you for helping us through the past year. Thank you that you've carried us through the uncertainty of deep waters, through the flames of trials, and through the pain of losses. We are constantly aware of how much we need you, your grace, your strength, and your power working through even the toughest days.

Fill us with your joy and the peace of your Spirit. Direct our hearts and minds towards you. Thank you for your reminder that both in seasons of celebration and in seasons of brokenness, you're still with us. For you never leave us. Thank you for your daily powerful presence in our lives. We can be assured your heart is towards us, your eyes are over us, and your ears are open to our prayers. Thank you for surrounding us with favour and a shield, and we are safe in your care.

We choose to press in close to you today and keep you first in our hearts and lives. Without You, we would surely fail, but with You, there is great hope. Thank you for your healing power. Thank you for bringing us into the coming year. We look forward to all that You still have in store. In Jesus' name, **Amen**

Debbie McDaniel (Edited) <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/prayer/>



*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.*



## Refurbishment of the carpark behind the church

The Church rear carpark will be closed for resurfacing during the period **Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th January.**

Please ensure no cars are parked there during this period. The car park entrance will be closed off on Monday 13 January.

Please direct any queries to Chris Ashley M: 0400 056 448

E: [chris.ashley@iinet.net.au](mailto:chris.ashley@iinet.net.au)



## Busy Bee Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January

3 or 4 volunteers are invited to join a Busy Bee on Saturday **11th January 2025, starting at 9am** (if it is going to be very hot the busy bee will start at 8am.) The purpose of the busy bee is to weed the carpark behind the church in preparation for the carpark being resurfaced the following week.

If you can help please contact Christ Ashley M: 0400 056 448

E: [chris.ashley@iinet.net.au](mailto:chris.ashley@iinet.net.au)



## The Annual Report

Your editor is in the early stages of compiling this year's Annual Report. If you have any photos taken at the church (e.g. the Advent Concert) or at church functions (e.g. the ladies morning teas) which may be suitable for inclusion in the report please send them in PDF format to Peter as soon as possible E: [prpunch@lasar.net.au](mailto:prpunch@lasar.net.au)



## Coffee, Cake & Fellowship

You are invited to join the ladies or gentlemen respectively for coffee, delicious pastries and scintillating conversation:

**For Ladies: She Brews - 9-30am every Wednesday**

Café Coast, 45 Rees Pl, Port Bouvard Marina, Wannanup

**For Gentlemen: Espresso - 9-30am Tuesday 7th January**

**& then Fortnightly** at the Taste of Italy Café in the Halls Head Shopping Centre

**More information?** Contact Peter M: 0427 685 908 E: [prpunch@lasar.net.au](mailto:prpunch@lasar.net.au)



## Pastoral Care

For pastoral care or spiritual guidance please contact:

**Rev. Mike Fawcett**

M: 0412 243 677

E: [fawcettmichael176@gmail.com](mailto:fawcettmichael176@gmail.com)

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



## Your Messenger

If you are not receiving this Newsletter by email and wish to do so, please contact Peter at: [prpunch@lasar.net.au](mailto:prpunch@lasar.net.au)

Any articles, notices or prayer requests for the Messenger should be emailed to Peter no later than **5pm Wednesdays**

*Thank you*

