



The Messenger

South Mandurah Uniting Church's Weekly Newsletter

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



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)

Epiphany 2 19 January 2025

Welcome: Rosie Sharp & Judy Law
 Flowers: Jan Gibson
 Coffee/Tea: Ken & Julie Lehmann
 Reader: John Lawrence
 Kids Church: TBA
 Music: Jan Gibson
 Church Rep: Andrew Telfer
 Worship Leader: Andrew Telfer
 Speaker: Piet Speyers



Readings from the Lectionary

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

Is 62:1-5
 Ps 36:5-10
 1 Cor 12:1-11
 Jn 2:1-11



South Mandurah Uniting Church

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 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: 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.

The Baptism of Christ

In the season of Epiphany we look at those special events in Jesus' life where his presence was especially manifested with power. Jesus' baptism is one of those epiphanies. You heard Luke's version read this morning. The Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased." In newer translations, which are thought to be more accurate, the adjective "beloved" is made a separate phrase to emphasize the intensity of the personal nature of this experience. "You are my Son. My beloved. In thee I am well pleased."

That is Luke's version. All four gospels portray this scene. But Luke's version is a little different than the others. In each version, though, the Spirit descends "like a dove." The Holy Spirit is not a bird. Luke and the other apostles use the dove as a metaphor for the Spirit's coming into our lives. It is a beautiful metaphor. Have you ever seen a dove descend and land? It is graceful, gentle, and quiet. That's the point being made. That is the way the Holy Spirit will enter into our lives. The Holy Spirit came to Jesus gently, quietly, and in Luke's version, privately.

That is why Luke is different than the other three gospels. The other writers imply that the Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism, apparently when he was still in the water. That is the way this scene is often portrayed in religious art, especially those beautiful paintings out of the Middle Ages. Jesus, standing waist deep in water. John the Baptist standing next to him, pointing at Jesus, as if to say, "This is the one!" or, in the words of the Gospel of John, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!" Above Jesus' head in these scenes is the Spirit, as a dove, descending. It is like the symbol that is in the baptismal font here, a nimbus around the Holy Spirit as he hovers above Jesus' head.

That's the way all the other gospels picture it. But Luke is different. He says, "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the Holy Spirit descended upon him." Which means that the Epiphany, this special presence of God in this event, came to Jesus when he was by himself, praying. In other words, it wasn't a public event. It was a personal and private experience. No one else saw it. No one else heard that voice from heaven. He came out of the water, went off by himself, and prayed. That is when it happened and how it happens for all believers. The coming of the holy spirit is a deeply personal matter, no one can physically see the event, but it is unforgettable for those who have faith in our Lord Jesus.



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

The Waters of Death and Life

Those who are baptised in Jesus do not need to strive after a new life. They have already attained new life through dying with Christ. But they do need to nurture that new life so it can grow and mature. That's what church is for. That's what Bible study is for. That's what prayer is for. It is like the Parable of the Sower. Many of those seeds sprouted up, but only a few grew into maturity. The rest withered and died.



A wealthy businessman was horrified to see a fisherman sitting beside his boat, playing with a small child. "Why aren't you out fishing?" asked the businessman.

"Because I caught enough fish for one day," replied the fisherman.

"Why don't you catch some more?"

"What would I do with them?"

"You could earn more money," said the businessman. "Then with the extra money, you could buy a bigger boat, go into deeper waters, and catch more fish. Then you would make enough money to buy nylon nets. With the nets, you could catch even more fish and make more money. With that money you could own two boats, maybe three boats. Eventually you could have a whole fleet of boats and be rich like me."

"Then what would I do?" asked the fisherman.

"Then," said the businessman, "you could really enjoy life."

The fisherman looked at the businessman quizzically and asked, "What do you think I am doing now?"

Are you striving after new life or are you already there, enjoying it, finding rest in Christ. If not I invite you to be baptized and share in the peace and rest only God can give.

Paul Peterson, *The Waters of Death*

The Annual Report

Thank you to those who have sent 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 this year's Annual Report. More photos are needed so please send them in PDF format to Peter as soon as possible E: prpunch@lasar.net.au



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 on Monday 13 January.

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

E: chris.ashley@iinet.net.au



NO PARKING

Busy Bee Saturday 11th January

3 or 4 volunteers are invited to join a Busy Bee on Saturday **11th January 2025, starting at 9am.** 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



A Prayer: The Baptism of Christ

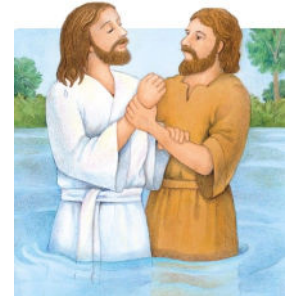
Lord Jesus,
we give thanks for your humility
when you asked John to baptise you in the Jordan River.
We rejoice that the Spirit came to you, gentle as a dove,
and the Father delighted in you as his beloved Son.

Wade with us into the waters of our daily life
as we resolve again to live by the promises
made at our baptism.

Hold us tight in case we slip and fall,
and renew in us God's life in the Holy Spirit.

Lead us deeper into the love of the Father,
so we may always know that we are the beloved children
and true believers in the words you preached.

Amen.



www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/publications/prayers/ (Edited)

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)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Mike Fawcett Tuesday 14 January
*God Bless and warm wishes
To you upon your birthday*