

Uniting Tasmania



Presbytery of

<https://ucatas.org.au/>

Issue No. 200

December 2021

Advent
Journey
2021



For more detail about the online Advent journey on Mondays via Zoom, see page 3

Christmas is a time of welcome

As the seasonal celebrations of the birth of Jesus begin, we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus, the one in whom Christians see the divine and eternal most clearly embodied, uniquely incarnated, *in-fleshed*. The Jesus we meet in the gospels is not primarily concerned about religious practices, ritual purity, or a person's inner spiritual life. Time and time again in the gospels we hear, we see, Jesus confronting the religious leaders of his day and the political leaders of his day, and challenging them all to extend God's eternal welcome, to live with more compassion, to include those on the margins of society and the most vulnerable, widows and orphans, refugees and aliens, the poor and meek. The Jesus we meet in the gospels, and to which Christians bear witness in every time and place, does not remain a gentle infant, meek and mild, but actively and radically seeks to extend God's welcome to all. (...see last page)

Reflection

Page 2

Social Justice

Page 4

Message from Caro

Page 6

UCA Tasmanian Office closed from 2:00pm on 24 December

Reflection

Lay Preacher Prayers

The following prayers were written by lay preachers at the recent hub days. Others may or may not be coming, depending on whether they did their homework or not.

Thank you Spirit for your presence here today
And your continued guidance in our lives.
We give thanks for the opportunity to be here
And worship you in our ministry deliberations.
Open us to hear
And to discern how to serve.
Amen.

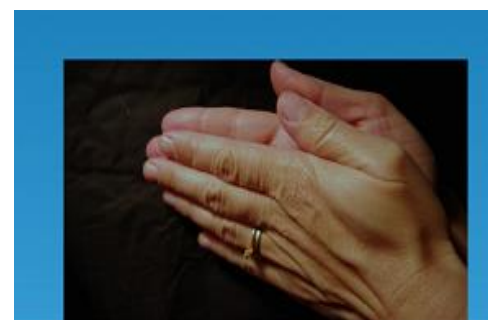
Friends, we are privileged to be here with God.
We acknowledge God's presence and ask for guidance.
We thank you for the freedom to come into your presence.
Help us to be together, focused on you
Hold us in this time of learning that we may grow.
Amen

Our heavenly Father (Silence)
Centre of our souls (Silence)
Open our ears to hear.
Open our hearts to receive.

Quiet our souls.
Fill our spirits.
Hush the business/busyness of life
So that we
can open
our ears to
hear your
word,
Open our
hearts to
receive you.
Amen



Make us into a well-watered garden.
Dig us.
Sift us.
Remove the stones and clods that obstruct.
Fill us with the compost of your Spirit.
Plant us with the seeds of your love.
Make us
into a well-
watered
garden.
Amen.



Go to be
your part in God's plan.
Go as God's own people as one with Christ.
Go with the Holy Spirit, God's stamp of ownership on you.
Amen.

Advent Journey 2021



Online via Zoom
Monday through Advent
29 Nov
6, 13, 20 Dec
7:30pm - 9pm (at the latest)

Offline Resource available for local small group use.

Contact Denise Savage
denise.savage@victas.uca.org.au

Online and offline small group resource and opportunity to build and strengthen understanding, owning and sharing our faith, and the story of God with the communities in which we live. Using images, biblical stories and our own story to engage more deeply with Advent in the journey towards Christmas.



What in this image connects with your experience of Advent and preparing for Christmas?

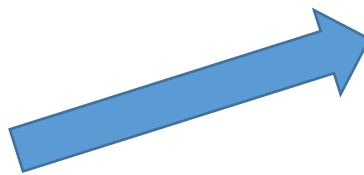
Where does that connect with your sense of who God is and the activity of God in the Christmas story?

What does that mean for you as you come towards the season of Advent?

Reflections on Social Justice

As we approach the season commemorating the amazing gift to creation, including humanity, of the birth of Jesus we are drawn into the blessings of giving and receiving. The Christ Mass is celebrated with joy, generosity, sacrifice, renewal and just plain friendship and fun. Thus am I moved to return to some thoughts which came to mind earlier in the spring of the past liturgical year when the Old Testament lessons were drawn from the story of Job. Thus this reflection emerges part as comment on a scripture passage and part as social comment, and in no way claims any Biblical scholarship. Just some thoughts from an aging head!

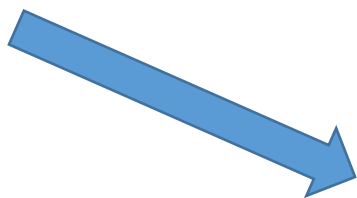
As I see it the story of Job is presented as a dramatic play. It may or may not be historical. Perhaps it is like many of Shakespeare's plays which dramatise historical stories. I take the liberty of supposing that readers will have some knowledge of Job's story and will know too of many common perceptions of Job's friends. Common expressions include the term, "*Job's comforters*" in reference to those who due to lack of empathy or limited capacity in self expression or just plain hardness of heart are no comforters at all. On occasion "*Job's so called comforters*," has cropped up. As we celebrate friendship we may benefit from thinking about Job's friends.



Job is a happy family man with seven sons and three daughters, he has a reputation for impeccable integrity and he has built and manages a substantial mixed business. The text is impressive (Job 1:3) the home base was a sheep farm with seven thousand head. From that base there were three thousand camels. These were and are still in places the goods carrying trucks on those regions, strings of camels linked much of North Africa and Asia as far afield as China, India, Persia and more. Job was a substantial trader. I have a picture of a lad with his father watching a camel train with an exchange like, "*Look at those fine healthy animals, look at how the harness shines in the sun, that must be one of Mr. Job's trains.*" Next in the list is '500 yoke of oxen'. We would call them bullocks. These were the tractors and heavy loaders of the time. Did he also grow a lot of crop or was he a contractor? We are not told, but we know for sure that 500 yoke means a lot of hard work was happening in Job's life. And '500 she asses', donkeys, these were the personal transport or delivery vans. Again we are not told, either Job had a stock breeding enterprise, perhaps there is a clue in the designation of 'she asses', or there were delivery vans running hither and skitch.

Then came recurrent disasters, death of family, loss of assets and serious infection. Job is left with his wife, destocked sheep run, an uncomfortable life **and his friends**.

What amazing friends. Job is in total shock, distress and physical discomfort. In his misery he goes out the back door and sits on the wood heap. Three friends turn up. Do they bring a casserole and mutter a few words of consolation and then drift off? No, they sat there on the wood heap, with Job, in silence, until he was ready to speak and only then did they utter a word. Most texts say the silence lasted seven days and nights, some three days and nights. Here is a place to measure the worth of our friendship, I doubt if I could qualify as such a friend, probably few Australians would show such commitment. A few first nations people, maybe.



We know that Job is in deep mourning/ grief. Students of this condition have defined specific stages of grief and publish lists ranging from 5 – 12 in number. These include:- shock and denial – pain, guilt, anger – anger, bargaining – depression, reflection, loneliness – the upward turn – reconstruction and working through – acceptance and hope. The writer of Job also had this knowledge and we encounter all of these stages through long conversations where Job's friends lead him through, step by step. In the end faithfulness and integrity win and Job's fortunes are restored.

There are a few unanswered questions. Job's wife shared the grief and was ready to 'throw in the towel', was she the one who kept the food and fluid up to four fellows on the wood heap for seven days and nights. She had already given birth to ten children and all had been taken, did she manage another ten? These asides are brushed over by the writer.

(Job ch 42) The text reads, "*Yahweh restored Job's fortunes*" How did the almighty actually do this? There in the postscript we are told, all his friends and wider family sent around the hat and gave him his start up capital and we may suppose that careful management and hard work did the rest. Once more Job's friends come to the fore. We are told that much of the giving was in gold. Before the modern banking system people's reserve funds, that wee bit aside for a rainy day, maybe even a retirement fund were kept as gold and, for safe keeping, often worn. This, we are told, is what went into the hat. This is true generous, sacrificial giving, this is the stuff of real friends. Friends of the calibre that can sit it out until the hurt one is ready to speak, who will stay in there right through the grief process and will give away their savings.

In the Christ Mass we celebrate the Divine giving to us by sharing, as we are able, with friends and family. The story of Job just sneaked sideways into the lectionary but it is worth a second look to stop and measure our friendship against that enacted by Job's friends.

Ian R F

And they'll know we are Christians by ...?

It's hard to believe we are already entering December and looking down the barrel of all the extra work and preparations for Christmas that the end of the year brings. Time has flown so quickly this year!

2021 has been a challenging year for most of us, as the uncertainties of COVID have continued to interfere with plans for travel, opportunities to see family and friends on the Big Island, and church events and worship practices too. So, as we approach the end of this year, many of us are tired, and perhaps feeling a bit stressed.

When the COVID pandemic first reared its head, some people started a Facebook group called *The Kindness Pandemic*, (which currently has over half a million members around the world). In this group, members share accounts of kind acts that they have encountered, whether on the giving or receiving end, or just observers. During the past 18 months many people have commented how reading these stories of kindness has helped them to cope with life, and restored their faith in human kindness.

As Christians, kindness is our stock-in-trade, as Jesus calls us to love one another: *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* (John 13:34-35)

So why am I saying all this? I have been deeply concerned in recent weeks to learn that some of our presbytery staff have been on the receiving end of some distressing behaviour. This has included angry phone calls and voicemail messages made to the UCA Tas office, and aggressive responses to some of the other communications sent out by staff.

Our Presbytery Ministers and administration staff work very hard and are committed to serving God and the church through the work of the presbytery (and I know that all of them work over and above the hours they are contracted to work in their terms of employment or placement). They are also human, and sometimes make mistakes, or aren't able to respond to some things in the way, or timeframe, that people might want. They're human, just like the rest of us. And just like the rest of us, they have also experienced the challenges of this year, with all its uncertainties and extra workload that managing changing COVID responses has required.

As Chairperson of the Presbytery of Tasmania, it is important to me that our Presbytery staff have a workplace that is both physically and emotionally safe for them, whether they are working in the office, or in meetings of the presbytery and its committees, or in their engagement with congregations and individuals across the presbytery. So I ask you to please be mindful that whenever you send an email, or make a phone call or leave a message, there is a human person, a brother or sister in Christ, at the receiving end, who will be affected by the words and tone you use.

There's a quote that's been doing the rounds of the internet during the past year or so. I'm not sure of its original source, but I think it is something that we would all do well to take on board:

'In a world where you can be anything, choose to be kind.'

Rev Caro Field
Presbytery Chairperson



Godly PlayAustralia

<http://godlyplay.com.au/>



HELP NEEDED – van or trailer transport from Melbourne to Tasmania?

Does anyone know someone who is travelling Melbourne to Tasmania on the Spirit with a van or trailer. We are needing to get a substantial Godly Play resource - stories and mobile shelving across hopefully before the end of December. There will be financial assistance to enable this to happen so people aren't having to take the cost of assisting.

If you know of someone please contact us so we can get them connected and sorted with where the resource is etc.:

Denise Savage: denise.savage@victas.uca.org.au or

Valentina Satvedi Leydon: pilgrim.valentina@iinet.net.au

PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Uniting Church George Town

SUNDAY, 5th December 2021
2.30 pm



Welcoming the Christ Child
An afternoon of song and verse

Guest artists

Launceston Male Choir

Local artists

Afternoon tea

A Donation towards Christmas Care Packs for overseas
seafarers visiting our shores may be made on the day
or by Direct Debit – contact: tamvalfun@bigpond.com



Missions to Seafarers Australia

“...big delays and more expensive consumer goods in Australia are “a big possibility” in the lead up to Christmas” according to this ABC RN article which highlights the shipping container shortage and notes, “ most people are unaware that a lot of things they are using in their everyday life need to be transported in containers.”

But ships don't bring us goods – Seafarers do. As we recognise the inventor of the shipping container – Malcolm McLean – let's also recognise the 1.6 million or so Seafarers, the forgotten floating community, who crew the vessels that transport the containers. Many are working beyond their contract. There's little opportunity to connect with families. Shore leave may be restricted or not available at all. Other Seafarers are desperate for jobs, but the logistics of crew changes means they're still waiting.

As we're encouraged to think about our Christmas shopping this year, let's also think about Seafarers spending another Christmas apart from their families and support the MTS Christmas Care pack appeals in our centres.

From the Linked In feed of Missions to Seafarers Australia...

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/mtsaustralia>

...with links to...

- [ABC News](#)
- [DCN - Daily Cargo News](#)
[This 'brilliant invention' lets us cram 900 million cans of baked beans onto...](#)

Did you know the UCA Assembly has a strategic plan?

A strategic plan is no good if it gathers dust in Sydney. [Assembly Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023 - Uniting Church Australia](#) This plan has the following five elements:

ASSEMBLY STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 – 2023

FIVE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

RESPOND TO
THE CHURCH

IDENTITY

INNOVATION

INTER-
GENERATIONAL

INTER-CULTURAL

INNOVATION

Take risks, experiment
and shape our church to
respond to the needs of
today and those of the
future

Support networks and
Councils of the Church
exploring emerging
expressions of the church

Enable Collaboration on
Uniting Learning Platform

Address the structures and
regulatory framework of
the whole Church

Develop Ways for Future
Sustainability of Assembly

“An innovative Church? Despite how it sounds, it’s not a far-fetched idea. In fact the Uniting Church has innovation inscribed into the very fabric of its DNA.

First, let’s wind it back to 1971, when scholars first penned the *Basis of Union* and ensured that pioneering thought and ministry would be a driving undercurrent of the Church. Union scholars wrote: *“The Uniting Church lives within a world-wide fellowship of Churches in which it will learn to sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought. Within that fellowship the Uniting Church also stands in relation to contemporary societies in ways which will help it to understand its own nature and mission. The Uniting Church thanks God for the continuing witness and service of evangelist, of scholar, of prophet and of martyr. It prays that it may be ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds.” (Basis of Union)*

Confessing the Lord in “fresh words and deeds” seems more important than ever as we face a future where the idea of faith needs to address the needs of the “spiritually homeless”. Spiritual entrepreneurship is about pioneering ways we can invest and develop ministry in what is a post-Christian culture. The idea of spiritual entrepreneurship is taking hold in the Uniting Church and it has never been more vital as the Church and its membership ages. So what are we doing to sharpen our understanding of the will and

purpose of God through contemporary thought?...”

From [Future Present: Innovation and the Uniting Church – Insights Magazine \(uca.org.au\)](#) (Edited – and it continues...)

Thirsty Ground presents
SHOWTIME CONCERT

Saturday 11 December, 4 pm

Scots-Memorial Church

Funds raised will be used to assist Sebastian Ziomek,
9yr old boy, who has type 4 Autism; he is wheelchair-bound
& no verbal, amongst other disabilities.

All funds raised will be used to install a hydrotherapy spa unit.

Tickets: \$15 / \$10 concession
available from Church Office—6231 4498.

FEATURING: Thirsty Ground, “Song of Life” telling the story of members of the group, some of whom have had to deal with great adversities in their lives.

All funds raised will be used by Seb’s family to install a hydrotherapy spa unit to assist with his pain management; currently hydrotherapy sessions are only possible once per week, by installing a unit in his home, this will enable Seb to have daily sessions. This is recommended by his doctors as being the best/only means of Seb gaining relief from muscle spasms.

Let’s make this a successful fundraiser for Seb and his family.

SEE YOU THERE!!



Contractor & Consultant Safety Obligations

All independent contractors and consultants must comply with the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic), Work Health & Safety Act (Tas) 2012, Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic) and Work Health & Safety Regulations (Tas) 2012.

Contractor & Consultant Safety Obligations

The UCA is committed to maintaining a safe workplace through the introduction of an Online Contractor & Consultant Induction platform called Linksafe.

To prepare for the Online Safety Induction, all persons must have their Working with Children Check (Victoria), industry or professional registration and/or licences and insurances. These must remain valid on check-in at Church property in order to proceed.

A contractor or consultant must be pre-qualified to the digital platform to be able to receive a link to the Online Safety Induction. Contractors and consultants will be responsible for ensuring all workers and sub-contractors complete the induction before attending any Church site.

The contractor or consultant must provide training and directives to their employees and sub-contractors to establish and maintain a safe workplace, as far as reasonably practicable.

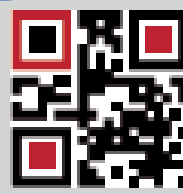
Report any incident, even if no one is injured, to: Synod Safety Officer Elnura Dulakovic.
t: 0416 319 162
e: synodchs@vic.unsa.org.au

1



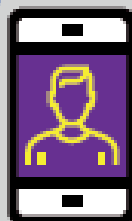
Before arriving at Church property, all builders, contractors, tradespersons and consultants must be pre-qualified and have completed the Online Safety Induction.

2



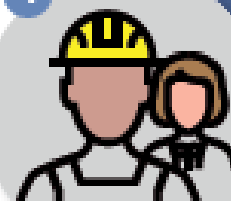
On arrival at Church property, all builders, contractors, tradespersons and consultants must sign in using the Linksafe QR code to confirm their induction.

3



All builders, contractors, tradespersons and consultants must present their proof of induction on their mobile phone to the local Church representative who will advise of the emergency evacuation plan.

4



The Church representative must offer a contact name and phone number. All incidents must be reported, even if no one is injured.

5



Builders, contractors and tradespersons must isolate their work from all persons who are not part of their work team. This can be achieved with barriers or bollards and externally by temporary fencing.

6



Builders, contractors and tradespersons must review the Church property asbestos register before starting any construction work.

Property Services: Level 2, 130 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, 3000
t: (03) 9116 1400 e: property@vic.unsa.org.au w: vic.unsa.org.au



CAROLS IN THE VILLAGE



Evandale Uniting Church Grounds



5pm Sunday 12th December 2021

Children's Pageant from Evandale Primary

To be followed by

Santa

Sausage Sizzle & B.Y.O. Picnic

Coffee & Tea will be provided



Joy to the world



Bring a rug or chair – In the Church if raining

This 'n That

■ Have you read a **good book** lately that has extended your understanding of God, spirituality, theology, the Bible? Send us a review.

■ The Tasmanian Office does not have access to its usual sources for Christmas Cards this year.

■ Reminder of Chris Barnett's usually monthly update of Children and Families Ministry Resources. If you wish to be added or removed from this list which comes via email please contact Chris at Chris.Barnett@victas.uca.org.au

Praying for Everyone

- For the ongoing work and ministry of the fourteen Lay Preachers and lay worship leaders who connected with the Lay Preacher Hub days this year.
- For sensitivity and tolerance with each other as we cope with the ongoing stresses of a pandemic and the opening of borders.
- To the God who makes all things new and us as we use our God given gifts to explore innovative ways to serve God in our world.
- For Seafarers and those drawn to connect with them.
- For Thirsty Ground, with their inspiring music ministry, for Sebastian Ziomek and the fundraising concert to enable the broadening of his life options.
- For all of us as we love our neighbours through attention to Occupational Health and Safety and the other means of keeping all people safe.



Give a Flynn, Give Hope

For just **\$20** you can support Aussie farmers, today!

For details visit <https://frontierservices.org/the-great-outback-bbq-2020/>

What's On

December

Tue 2	10am	Presbytery Standing Committee
Tue 7	10am	Pastoral Relations Committee
Tue 7	11am	Resource and Development Committee
Fri 24	2pm	Presbytery Office Closed

Annual reminders for Congregations: (this section is back by popular demand)
December: Check items in Annual Maintenance Statements Log Book

(continued from front page)

Jesus embodies the free and gracious gift of God's eternal welcome to all. This is what Christmas celebrates, just like Easter: new life, new hope, new possibilities for each of us, and for all of creation.

This is what the Church's season of Advent is for: an unexpected and new thing happened long, long ago, and in every new generation since, people find this story of new life and new hope provides a powerful alternative to the commercial stories our global media-saturated culture now relentlessly tells us. We need new hope, as we face the huge challenges of global pandemic, climate change, domestic violence and global warfare, obscene wealth and dire poverty, religious conflicts and terrorism.

The Christmas story relentlessly critiques the powerful kings and rulers of our world, and invites us to live with grace, integrity and humility. These build resilience and help us to live lives of purpose and meaning. Advertising and social media relentlessly tell us to be consumers, but we know already that we consume far more than the earth can sustain. We need to live with responsibility and commitment to recover a sustainable world. We are relentlessly told to fear difference, but we know already that compassion, belonging and inclusivity build authentic relationships for everyone's wellbeing and a safer world.

As Christmas approaches, I encourage you to listen for the deep values that lie beneath the snowflakes and tinsel, to share a welcome with family and friends and strangers, and to live with care and compassion: love is what the world needs now, and in Jesus we see love born in human form. It is in this form that we see embodied a love which eternally welcomes all in order to bring hope and new life to all.

May the story of Christmas be born anew for you.

Rohan Pryor

Synod Liaison Minister (Tas.) and Presbytery Minister for Pastoral Care

Published and distributed in the week before the last Sunday of each month.

Contributions received seven days prior to publication.

Editor: Graham Booth, 36 Paterson Street, Launceston, 7250

or (03) 6331 9784 or tas.office@victas.uca.org.au

Presbytery of Tasmania website: <https://ucatas.org.au>

The map of Tasmania including King and Flinders Islands has been adapted from a Creative Commons file
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Australia_Tasmania_location_map_blank.svg