



Surfcoast Anglican Parish

10 January 2021

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, in abundance, for we continue to need both of these resources.

This crisis has shown us how fragile we are. It has challenged us to face fragility, find hope for ourselves and love for others as we navigate our days. It has been a time of limited, slow and small things. But these are things that have value, and it has been timely in our world as much as it has been frustrating. In our usual busyness, as we exercise our full freedoms we can fail to take stock, reflect, act thoughtfully and be grateful and gracious. Our propulsion has come to a halt. Thank God.

But there is stress nonetheless. From uncertainty and news overload, constant readjustments, social and physical limits, a sense of powerlessness, and real grief and fatigue. In the midst of this some of us have been unwell.

We have become more aware of the financial and growth issues that were already of rising concern in our parish, and while we have weathered this part of the season well, we must continue to be resourceful, resilient and adaptable, as well as outward looking as we move forward. With Christ in us we are broken bread for a hungry world. The help we have been given by him, we are to share, with thankful hearts and kind actions and words.

I am endeavouring to be measured but purposeful in reopening ministry so that we make forward progress that is needed, that works toward health and is also sustainable and appropriate to our needs.

I am working with our Op Shop to find a new coordinator as Barry Butcher steps back from the role. He has been a key part of the success of the store and will stay on the team. We must continue to sustain the team as together we “engage and work with the broader community.”

Our audio/video/computer systems need some upgrades so we can maintain our organisation effectively, and provide and produce weekly material without disasters and wasted time.

We need to find team members for Anglesea Mainly Music and I may join them so they can reopen with the school year. We envision ourselves to be “enthusiastic and welcoming” - let us move forward to our goal.

Pastoral visiting can be done more easily and I am meeting with folk who are at home for various reasons. I have some resources for Lent, and expect to run a group in Anglesea. I would like to reopen some sort of regular ministry in Aireys

that is appropriate to the needs in that community, regular group home communion will likely be the first step followed by a Lenten study.

Our music resources were quite limited prior to closing, and I am increasingly aware of it. St Luke's will need to adjust some of its expectations to fit what we can provide, some improvements can be made, but little without new members who have these skills.

I am aware of the desire to reopen Wednesday services. Wednesday has been a small and life giving service, and the only service for a few folk. At present of the 10-12 regulars almost all come to Sunday. I would like to put this time and the resources that would go to reopening this service to work that is not already being done in some way - one alternative is dedicated time for prayer which could include offering prayer for healing in Torquay, in addition to Group Meditation in Anglesea. This would use a familiar time for fresh purposes that may assist us toward a deeper connection with God, combined with a place to receive care in a more personal and quiet way. It may be something we can offer to the wider community as a place of respite and assistance helpful during these times. We could act on our Parish Vision of being "valued for our contribution to the wellbeing of the Surf Coast community; and for providing ways for people to explore their spirituality" and for myself and others to "nurture people's relationship with God."

Moving forward relies on all of us being able and willing to share in the work, as well as restrictions lifting. Diocesan authorisations for all volunteers have a date follow up of and new clearances and we are refreshing the rosters to have them ready for February as well. Can I encourage you to consider how you can serve this year? Your capacities and availability may have changed, you might need to let go a roster, or join in something less physical. Or make some adjustments and contribute in a new way or to a new task. Perhaps you could do a roster with a friend or as a group to get it done quicker and easier. We may make cleaning fortnightly for the church and office, to help us spread the burden a little, the Op Shop are cleaning hall and bathrooms and kitchens and meeting room can be covered by the morning tea roster with a blitz as needed less often. If you'd like to join a team contact Barbara Bell: welcoming, reading, prayers, slideshow, morning tea, brass, church/office cleaning and flower rosters. And of course the Op Shop, contact Jill Shaw, Jess or myself if you'd like to help there. If you have other skills come and speak to me.

Our Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and his colleague Bishop Rose have called their community to "renew daily prayer, reflection on scripture, periods of silence and resting in the presence of our Lord and Saviour. Such disciplines have genuine physical as well as spiritual and mental benefits." These seem good words for us as well as we move into our year.

May you know the Lord's blessing for you and your home. Rev'd Sharon Valentino