

SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

SHEPPARTON RURAL CLUSTER



**The building is closed.
The Church is alive!**

NEWS SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

MINISTERS

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Rev Joan Fisher, Minister in Association 5821 8382

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SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 6

Praying Together Benalla, Devenish, Goorambat, Swanpool

Readings Ex 12.1-14 Ps 149 Rom 13.8-14 Matt 18.15-20

Worship Revd Loni Vaitohi

The service will be live on Zoom, or by phone, 9.30am See details opposite or use the website (above) to view the service later.

READINGS - SEPTEMBER

Sept 13 Ex 14.19-31 Ps 114 or Ex 15.1b-11, 20-21 Rom 14.1-12
Mt 18.21-35

Sept 20 Ex 16.2-15 Ps 105.1-6,13-75 Phil 1.21-30 Mt 20.1-16

Sept 27 Ex 17.1-7 Ps78.1-4 12-16 Phil 2.1-13 Mt 21.23-32

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters of the region, the Bangerang People of the Yorta Yorta Nations, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

SHEPPARTON WORSHIP ONLINE

Joining in to Worship with Zoom

Well done to everyone who joined in to Rosalie's farewell service by Zoom – we all managed very well for our first experience of live streaming a service using this technology.

It was wonderful to see all those who joined in from 9am and were able to 'see' each other and catch up after all these weeks of isolation. It was also very good to see that folk who do not have access to the internet or have the appropriate equipment were invited to visit the home of someone who does, so that they were able to participate in the service as well.

We plan to continue using this process each week, and the service will also be posted to Facebook as it has been for those who wish to catch up with it at a later time. Further details about Zoom in the emailed NEWS

Joining in to Zoom via the phone

Step 1: To join the meeting via a Phone call please dial one of the five following phone numbers: The 03 number is for Victoria so is likely to be a cheaper call than one of the interstate numbers.

03 7018 2005

02 8015 6011

07 3185 3730

08 6119 3900

08 7150 1149

Step 2: when prompted enter the meeting code on the Zoom invitation. This will change each week,

The Meeting Code for September 6 is **927 0876 0252** followed by the hash key #

Step 3: you will asked if you are the meeting host or a participant Don't worry about this question, just press #

Step 4: when prompted enter the passcode on the Zoom invitation, which will also change each week.

The Passcode for September 6 is **973029** followed by the hash key

CONGRATULATIONS TO A VERY SPECIAL COUPLE!

Nancy and John King will celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on September 10. The Congregation and Friendship Group congratulate you on achieving this very significant milestone - sixty years together!

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Thanks to all who are packing boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Thanks to others who have knitted beanies and to those who have given donations towards postage. There are still empty boxes for anyone who would like to help. Boxes will need to be finished by September 30. Please contact us for more information to pick up an empty box or returning a packed box.

FAREWELL SERVICE, ROSALIE AND JOHN, AUGUST 30

This week's NEWS includes the parts of last Sunday's service that were not printed for you before the service.

PRAYERS OF PRAISE and CONFESSION Revd Joan Fisher

Holy Creator God, you are the source of all life; the fount of all wisdom; the well-spring of all grace. We worship you and praise you.

No name we give could ever be enough for you. No image could ever capture your wonder; no words could ever capture your majesty. Not even the expanse of the whole universe can contain you.

We praise you for your awesome and intricate creation. In the largest moon and brightest star we see the work of your hands. In the colour and fragrance of Spring flowers, the birdsong filling the air, the cloud patterns at sunset, we see your power to sustain life.

We praise you for the diversity of humanity which you have created; for the gifts offered by people of different cultures.

Wonderful God, each day you show us the path of life; each day your presence brings joy into our lives. For – you are closer than our breathing, nearer than our hands and feet.

If we've come today with questions and doubts, please touch our hearts with your gift of faith. For you are utterly to be trusted.

God of mercy, as we focus on your presence we become more aware of our own weaknesses:

Sometimes we become proud of what we've achieved; sometimes we miss opportunities to share your compassion. Please forgive us, gracious God.....

Sometimes we make judgements about those who are different from us; or we don't treat with respect those who disagree with us. Please forgive us, gracious God.....

Sometimes our community treats the earth and its resources with little thought for the future; or for the needs of others whose lives we are affecting. Please forgive us, gracious God.....

O God, you hear our prayer and offer forgiveness because of who you are. Gratefully we bring our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS :

The love of God cannot fail. God receives us as we are, and offers us the forgiveness we need.

Hear the word of grace that Christ speaks to each one of us: '*Your sins are forgiven.*' **Thanks be to God.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Kim Read

Dear Lord, we come before you today with sadness in our hearts as we farewell Rosalie and John who have been an integral part of our lives for many years.

- As we deal with this sadness and loss, help us to be aware of those around us who are struggling in isolation. We pray for those who are separated from family and friends by the pandemic, and particularly for those who cannot visit loved ones in hospital. We pray for those who are struggling with illness and mental health issues, and for the health care workers who are caring for them at this time.

We pray for protection and safety for each member of our church family.

- We thank you for the commitment that Rosalie has given to the children in our community with countdown to Christmas, puppets and other activities. We pray for the families of young children and

seek to always protect the children in our community from physical and emotional harm.

Thank you for the leadership that Rosalie has given her time and commitment to, and we pray for the leaders within our churches, communities and parliament. May they be guided with wisdom, a clear vision and high ethical standards.

- Lord I remember the day there was an older frail looking man sitting at the front of the church. We were to learn that he was Rosalie's Dad, and sat in awe as he got up from his seat and passionately shared his love for you and inspired us with his words. Lord, give us the courage and strength to get up out of our seats to do your will, to encourage and support others, and to share your love.

As we pray for those who are going through the many changes that Covid has inflicted, may we lift up Rosalie and John and pray that they will be able to embrace the changes that lie ahead for them as they head off into a new adventure.

Thank you Lord that you are with every one of us, and may we learn to embrace and grow with each new challenge. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRESBYTERY TRIBUTE Joan McRae Presbytery Deputy Chair

In her years in Shepparton, Rosalie has been actively involved in the life of the Presbytery, attending all meetings of the Presbytery.

From 2011, Rosalie was a member of the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee and its Chair for four years.

Rosalie was also a member of Presbytery Standing Committee and represented the Presbytery at meetings of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

The past Chairperson of the Presbytery, Helen Collins, has asked me to thank you, Rosalie, for your support and wise guidance, when working through challenging issues and in Consultations and Presbytery Minister Reviews.

Rosalie, we thank you for your wonderful contribution to the life of the Presbytery of North East Victoria.

CONGREGATIONAL TRIBUTES Ray Luscombe

Strange and challenging times indeed! Normally this beautiful Worship Centre would be full to capacity with those of our congregation, brothers and sisters from the Rural Congregations as well as representatives from associated organisations who would dearly love to be here. It is a special privilege for Anni Russell and me to make today's presentations.

JOHN We thank you, John, for being absolutely faithful in support for Rosalie's ministry. Special things John did - he provided transport for children and families to church, KUCA, Messy Church, Countdown... John enriched worship with his reading and drama, starring as puppet master and angel at Countdown. The Op Shop Committee thank you, John, for your great contribution over the years. John once made a single sale in excess of \$140, to earn the title of Salesperson of the Year. John has an eye for a bargain, especially nice crystal, often commenting that Rosalie would like this. Thank you John, for your friendship and support.

Anni presented John with a hamper of local gourmet goodies.

LEILA We have watched Leila grow from a shy young Teen to a confident young woman. She was a member of the Youth Group. She enriched worship with her amazingly creative Advent wreaths. We wish Leila success and happiness for the future. Leila's gift was a plant.

ROSALIE Rosalie has been our friend and leader for nearly 13 years. Rosalie had a significant role in bringing together the congregations of St Andrew's, St David's, Wesley and Scots' to form the Shepparton Uniting Church. Rosalie made a strong contribution to the steering committee which built this fine new Worship Centre. May she look back with pride at these achievements.

Of course, by far Rosalie's pastoral leadership within our congregation has been her greatest achievement. She, alongside Rev Ross Stanford and Rev Loni Vaitohi, has touched the lives of many people. Whether it be baby Lucy Shields, our senior members like Betty Hildebrand, 90 years young tomorrow, and everyone in between, Rosalie has tried to embrace the spiritual needs of all ages.

Rosalie has not been afraid to introduce new ways of conducting services, choosing new hymns, different ways of conducting Communion and encouraging us to try something outside our comfort zone. Rosalie fostered special groups including Messy Church, Young Adults, Young Mums,

Countdown to Christmas and Cuppa and Chat Thursday mornings. Rosalie was an active member of the Shepparton InterChurch Council and of the Ministers' Association.

Rosalie Rayment-Hewitt, we called you to be our minister, to proclaim God's Word, to baptise new members into the Church of Jesus Christ, to announce God's forgiveness to us and to preside at our celebration of the Lord's Supper. With the Gospel, you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble and at the death of our loved ones.

Sharing our joys and sorrows, you and John have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to the community. You have served our congregation faithfully and now you are leaving our midst to serve in another congregation. On behalf of the members of these congregations we wish to honour your ministry among us and bid you farewell and God's blessing in your new endeavour.

Rosalie was presented with flowers, a cheque and *Shepparton Memories*, a photobook celebrating Rosalie's ministry in Shepparton.

ROSALIE'S RESPONSE

Thank you everyone for your generous and thoughtful gifts that were presented to John, Leila and myself. I particularly love the book of memories with all the photos and thoughtful contributions. It was certainly the ideal gift. Thank you too for the cards I have received and all the gifts you have given us over the years, gifts of support and encouragement and practical help where needed. The gift that continues to mean the most for me is your love of God and love of others as expressed in a myriad different way.

As I look out and see all the empty chairs I'm sorry that we can't gather in person today, but at the same time in my mind's eye I can see all your faces. Not just your faces but the faces of others with whom I have shared life and ministry over the last 13 years. Faces of people who were part of the congregation when I first came but have since died or moved away but remain part of that great cloud of witnesses that encourages us and spurs us on in the course set before us.

Over the years there have been many who have come and gone and others who have come and joined us in the last couple of years. Whether people have been part of our congregation for only a week or two or part of this community of faith for many decades each one is important, bringing their presence and gifts to our worship and service. I pray that in doing so

they themselves have found blessing, encouragement, and direction for their living.

As I look back over my time with you, there are things I would have liked to have done differently, other things that I didn't get to do. I also want to apologize for any hurt caused along the way. One of the things I thank God for is the way that as a congregation you have, through faith, been open to the leading of God's Spirit to step out in new ways. I am proud of the way that you have worked together through often difficult and challenging times in order to be the congregation you are today.

Despite the restrictions placed on congregational activities due to COVID 19 I believe that as a congregation you are in a good place. You will continue to be blessed through the ministry of Loni and Joan Fisher and whoever else comes to join the team but must importantly through the ministry you share together in Christ's name.

Soon after my arrival in Shepparton I read the booklet titled 'Methodist Church in Goulburn Valley 1873-1977'. What struck me was the question posed by the writer 'What more can be done to promote the work of God in the region?' For me this question is not so much about doing more as, outside of enforced COVID related inactivity, I think that most of you already lead very full and busy lives. For me the 'more' here is about attitude and openness and support for the new opportunities that will and do arise.

At the centenary service of Scots' church in 1985 the message delivered by Rev. Dr. Cliff Simpson concluded with the words 'Walk proudly into the future with high courage, certain that God will guide you.' Words that still apply today.

Thank you for the way you have welcomed, loved and cared for me and my family, including those children who came and went through the foster care program. May God continue to fill you with love for one another and love for all in our community. In whatever activities you undertake may you serve with humility and grace, willing to forgive and be forgiven, as you continue to grow and be shaped by the person and attitude of Christ. To God be the glory Amen.