



*We reach up to God, reach in to
one another and reach out to the
community*

41—43 Kings Road
Brighton-le-Sands NSW 2216
(02) 8964 9850

Email brightonuc@optusnet.com.au

Website <https://brighton.uca.org.au>

CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair	Ese Enari
Secretary	Alison Dain
Treasurer	Stephen Dain
Elders	Ese Enari Shirley Jackson Siunipa Manu
Members	Alison Dain Stephen Dain Carolyn Gates

PASTORAL CARE NEEDS

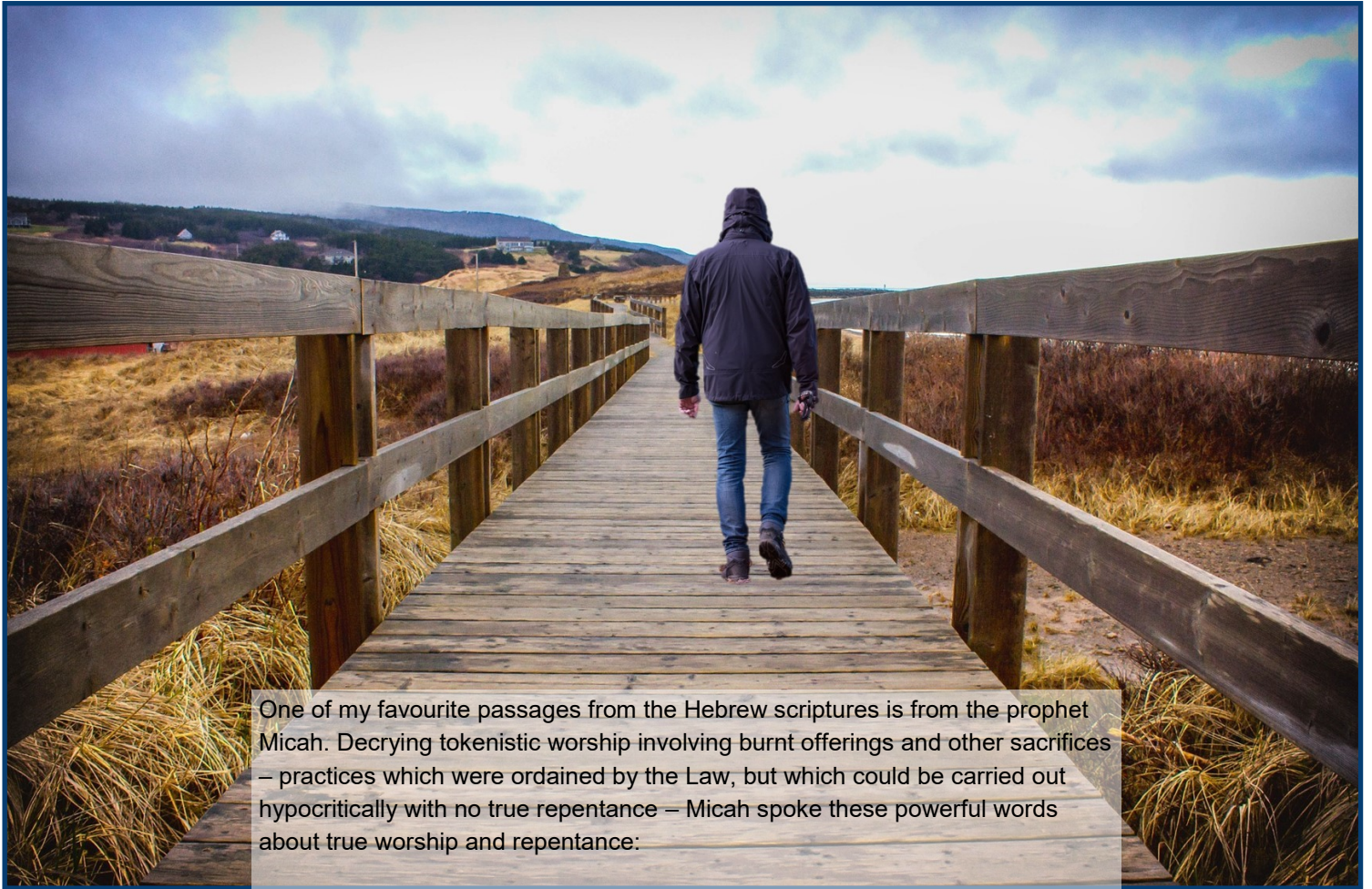
Ese Enari: esebuc20@gmail.com
0458 688 404 OR
Complete website contact details form

BANK DETAILS

BSB 634 634
A/C 100009085
Brighton-le-Sands Uniting Church



WALK HUMBLY



One of my favourite passages from the Hebrew scriptures is from the prophet Micah. Decrying tokenistic worship involving burnt offerings and other sacrifices – practices which were ordained by the Law, but which could be carried out hypocritically with no true repentance – Micah spoke these powerful words about true worship and repentance:

***He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8 NRSV)***

What the NRSV renders as “kindness” is often translated “mercy”, and justice tempered by mercy has become an important ideal among Christians. And rightly so.

However for me the even more powerful reminder is “to walk humbly with your God”. Humility is rapidly retreating as a cultural value. We really do live in a “me-centred” world, of which the “selfie” is possibly one of the most powerful symbols. Those who have fallen deeply into the abyss of self-centredness view anything and everything that happens around them only through the lens of how it affects them. Consideration of others is at best relegated to the back seat.

I was reminded of this cultural malaise on the morning I wrote this article for *The Link*. Players and other personnel were arriving in Melbourne for the Australian Open Tennis. Passengers on the specially chartered flights were tested for Covid-19 upon arrival, and several had been found to have the virus. Under Australia’s strict quarantine provisions, that necessitated all who had shared their flight to be treated as “close contacts” and to enter hotel quarantine for fourteen days. Unfortunate, yes, frustrating, yes, but also necessary for the greater good of the Australian community.



Within hours, Novak Djokovic was reported to have formulated a list of “demands”, a number of which would have involved compromises to the efficacy of the quarantine régime. His demands as they were reported bespoke an attitude that these

élite sportspeople were somehow special and entitled to be exempted from provisions of which they had been apprised before agreeing to come to Australia. Oh, and the hotel food wasn't of a sufficiently high standard! It was not the first time we had witnessed the overweening egos of sporting personalities.

Were such thinking restricted just to a tiny minority of people who can lay claim to fame in one way or another – famous actors, politicians, businesspeople, as well as sporting types – we could shrug it off with a sigh and regret the “spoiled brat” syndrome that sometimes (and *only* sometimes) accompanies fame and success. But sadly, the “me lens” has reached a mass market, and rears its head in all kinds of ways. Panic buying, because it's important that *I* have more than I need. Teachers having to deal with ever more parents whose child is special, can do no wrong, and must be considered ahead of all others. Cheating, or flouting the law, in all kinds of situations – providing *I* can get away with it – because *my* success or *my* convenience overrides fairness for everyone, or sometimes even the safety of others.

Of course there are – thanks be to God – great exceptions to such thinking. During 2020, our nation saw incredible sacrifice in the face of the devastating fires, by RFS personnel, community workers and local leaders. We saw



herculean efforts to tame and contain the potentially devastating pandemic by medical staff, researchers, contact tracers and others. We saw many random acts of kindness. So it is good to put the growing malaise of me-centred thinking into that perspective. But that does not make it any the less real, or any the less troubling.

The trouble with a me-fixated society is that it is ultimately unworkable. When a critical mass of people determines that their own interests outweigh the common good, then a society falls apart. The principles of the unwritten social compact lose their potency as individuals act in their own interests; and society has to establish, fund and maintain more and more oversight bodies to police standards that

could once be more-or-less taken for granted. Who would ever have thought, for example, that we would need to legislate that financial advisers must act in the best interests of their clients – or that such legislation would actually prove controversial? Who would have predicted the findings of the Banking Royal Commission, that once-esteemed financial institutions would knowingly charge fees with no intention of providing the service, and that legislation would be necessary to outlaw such malpractice? Who would have thought that security cameras would be seriously contemplated in nursing homes, to discourage abuse and neglect of the vulnerable residents? Or indeed that it would prove necessary to install security cameras almost everywhere because so many people can only be trusted when they know they are being watched? Who would have envisaged that our cherished freedom of speech would have to be actively policed because of the destructive and self-serving ways social media are used for personal abuse, political skulduggery and the propagation of untruths and baseless conspiracy theories?

The Bible consistently reminds us of the correct perspective in which we should see the world. The psalmist sang of this in the words of Psalm 8:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? (Psalm 8:3-4 NRSV)

Indeed, what *are* human beings in comparison to God? We only get the world right when we learn that God is at the centre of all things, that everything finds its right place when it is considered in relationship to the sovereignty of God, and that true perspective begins with God.

In Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, we see how rightly functioning human beings should be. Jesus always put others before himself, even to the point of going to his death to save others. That Jesus is our saviour, and that we owe our life, our forgiveness and our future to the God who died for us, and rose for us, certainly gives us a right perspective on the world. What, indeed, are human beings that God should be so mindful of us? Are we not driven back to that powerful injunction from the prophet Micah, that we must walk humbly before our God? Can there be any other way to live?

Alan Harper OAM

History Notes

Arthur Bernard Crisp and Ruth Jessie Walker

The first couple married in St. Andrew's, B-L-S.
10 June 1939.

Parents of Pam Schofield



St. Andrew's B-L-S decorated for the wedding of Albert Schofield and Helen Percival. Parents of Charles Schofield.

Photos courtesy of Charles & Pam Schofield



Interesting to note.

There was a problem with glare from the main window even then!

The pulpit is central on the upper dais and the communion table is on the lower level.

The panelling and wrought iron work have not yet been added.

We still have the hymn board, stored away.

Different elders' chairs.

Choir and organ area on the left.

No ordinary season

Since the beginning of "lockdown" in 2020 the Rev Jenny Ducker, the Pastoral Relations Minister at Sydney Presbytery, was sending out Pastoral Letters on a regular basis to members of Presbytery. Her insightful and thoughtful letters are a source of strength and comfort. The following letter, is reproduced with permission, and is just as relevant in 2021 on the way we 'do church'. Jenny sees the workings of the Holy Spirit through this critical time in our church history – and readers will perhaps find her comments somewhat surprising – but definitely inspiring.

No Ordinary Season - A Pastoral Note from Jenny



Dear friends,

"May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us."

Saint Teresa of Ávila (16th Century)

I was in a meeting a while ago when one person (kudos to Mark) stated that we've been talking about change being needed in the church for years, but little if anything has changed. Then along comes this virus and suddenly we change things almost overnight. He lamented that for all those years of talk, we had been ignoring the Holy Spirit, yet we sit up and pay attention to a virus.

I can certainly appreciate his frustration! And on one level I am completely in agreement. However, I'm also prepared to embrace a more positive and (hopefully) faith-filled response.

The years - decades, even - of talking about change in the church have indeed led to great frustration. I have heard that expressed and felt it myself time and again over the last three months and longer. Those years, however, have led to an increased hunger and readiness for change. They have also added to the sense of urgency. We have known for a very long time that if nothing changes in the church, we will continue the trajectory we seem to be on of declining numbers and an ageing profile. We will continue to have little perceived relevance to younger generations, and to the broader community. Our major dilemma seems to have been that we simply don't know what the change needs to be. Hence, we keep talking about it.

All of a sudden, we were forced into changing how we do our normal things (gathering, worship, pastoral practice, outreach, mission activities, ...) and we had to change very fast. I remember the last Sunday I sat in worship wondering if we would be able to gather the next Sunday, and what that would mean for us all. We weren't allowed to gather, and it meant we had to worship in a different way. It left the congregation's leadership scrambling - deciding what they could do, how they would do

it, and how they would get the message out to the congregation so all could join in. And it happened! Not only in the congregation with whom I worship, it happened across our Presbytery, across the Synod, across the country.

We made these changes because of a virus, but we made them in the power of the Holy Spirit!

If you follow the liturgical calendar, you will know that we have just celebrated Pentecost (2020), recalling that the Holy Spirit, the Helper Jesus promised to send, came and rested on the disciples and stirred them into action. After this Sunday (when we wrestle with the seemingly ungraspable nature of Trinity) we will be entering into a long season of “Ordinary Time” that will take us through to the celebration of Christ the King leading us into Advent. “Ordinary Time” is anything but ordinary! With its liturgical colour of green, it is a season in our church year when we look for new signs of life and growth. It is a time when we are nurtured as the people of God, and encouraged in our own discipleship in the world.

This is certainly no season - either in our liturgical calendar or through the restrictions we are still facing - to sit back and rest thinking that God will turn up when we can re-turn to “normal.” God *has* turned up, God *is* at work: in us and through us in the world. The Holy Spirit is leading us in the changes we have needed to make, not just because we’ve had to respond to the guidelines and restrictions around COVID-19, also because as a church we have needed to change.

I do not for a moment think that God ‘caused’ this virus to emerge and travel around the world in the way it is doing. However, I do believe very firmly that God is moving and working through this time, and through the people who allow God to live and breathe and work in them. In us and through us, the Holy Spirit is bringing the life and hope that the world needs to know — for all people and for all of creation. “Ordinary Time” is not normal. There *is* no normal, unless it becomes normal for us to follow wherever the Spirit leads us. Oh! May it be so!

Blessings and peace,

Jenny

February Roster

Please arrange substitutes when you are not able to do your allocated time.

Communion Sundays—someone please bring bread

Date	Colour	Preacher & Worship Leader	Musician	Bible Reader	Prayers of the People	Welcomers	Projector	Open close + Communion	Morning tea	God's Gang
07		Biu Tabuatamata	Alison & Komiti	Gordon	Gordon	Charles & Harry	Marques	Harry & Terangi	Gordon & Terangi	Shirley & Terangi
14		Cameron Eccleston	Alison & Arinona	Palwinder	Palwinder		Gordon		Carolyn & Alsion	Children in Church
21		Bruce Wyndham	Alison & Marques	Siunipa	Siunipa		Stephen		Talafu & Arinona	Shirley & Terangi
28		Rev Dr Hawea Jackson	Alison & Komiti	Terangi	Terangi		Shirley		Ese & Marques	Children in Church