

17/11/24  
**SERVICE OF CELEBRATION**  
**CAVES BEACH**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Times are changing.

**In the midst of change, you are the rock, O God, the place of security.**

Times are changing.

**In the midst of change, you are the strong one, O God, the source of courage.**

Times are changing.

**In the midst of change, you are the One longed for, O God, the root of peace.**

**Opening Prayer**

God has filled my heart with joy;

**we are happy at all God has done.**

God's love goes beyond imagining;

**God's greatness is beyond understanding.**

God restores life and hope;

**God gives a sense of self-worth to the poor and provides community to the lonely.**

God stands in solidarity with the faithful

**and works to bring light to the world's dark places.**

In the coming days, God's purposes will be fulfilled;

**the kingdom of God's Chosen One will triumph! Amen.**

**HYMN 569** Guide me, O thou great redeemer

**PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING & CONFESSION**

Loving God, to ask you to be present with us

is like a bird asking for the air to be present under its wings.

You have always been and always will be present with us and in us

in ways so much deeper than our knowing.

Like the sun lights the sky,

as the earth spins on its axis,

like breath fills our lungs,

you are with us and in us.

Thanks be to God!

Today, God of infinite patience, we seek that patience.  
We, who act as if we know what is going on.  
We, who are so sure of our actions and sure of our motivations.  
We, who are so sure of being right.  
We are the ones who need your graciousness.  
We do not know as much as we like to think.  
We do not hear as well as we like to think we do.  
We do not see as far as we could.  
We are so limited, and yet we act so limitless.  
Forgive us. Forgive us for arrogant certainty.  
Forgive us for the damage our arrogance and certainty  
does to others and to ourselves.  
Forgive us for not being humbled  
by the glories of your world every morning  
and the complex beauty of it every night.  
Forgive us for not resting in the great mystery of your love.  
Amen.

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Friends of God, God is with us,  
God is within us.  
We need only quieten our minds  
to know the presence  
and the forgiveness of God.  
in this and in every moment.  
We are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God!

### **RECITATION OF BRIEF HISTORY HISTORY**

In 1971, Caves Beach Uniting Church did not yet exist. The congregation met at Swansea Methodist Church, then located where the Swansea Nova Care Hall stands today. Seeing future growth, Rev. Bruce Walker helped secure land at Caves Beach for a new church and preschool.

Initially, worship was held in the preschool building until the current church and community centre were completed in 1976-77. In 1977, with church union, it became the Caves Beach Uniting Church. In 1998 nearby

churches at places like Catherine Hill Bay and Nords Wharf were merged into Caves Beach Uniting and the funds raised from the sales designated for future needs.

Over time the church was a hub of activity for the community with many and varying activities. The local youth were provided with classes for the unemployed. Members of the Church accompanied young people to job interviews and often attended court with young people.

There was a tradition of providing Sunday night dinners which provided fellowship for people having a difficult time and those who were lonely. The active Ladies' Fellowship had monthly meetings. They also had cake stalls and contributed to fetes. They were active in regional fellowship gatherings. Fashion parades were held as well as stalls selling pre-loved goods. On one occasion they even had a Scarecrow Competition.

Another popular activity was Meet and Learn. There was painting and a craft group. The artistic endeavours led to occasional painting exhibitions. Sessions on creative writing were mixed with drama and French lessons. Many members remember the line-dancing and exercise classes, a walking group, carpet bowls and card games. There was also a Friendship Club in the congregation.

Music was also an important part of the church activities. The church choir was popular along with musical evenings. Regular Carols by Candlelight are fondly remembered along with talent quests including entrants from local high schools. There was also a monthly sing-along at which residents from local aged care facilities participated and children from the preschool would sometimes come and sing.

In 1994 a play group was started led by Jean Gersbach who was ably assisted by other members like Dot Craig, Margaret Best, Pat Dadge and Carol Hayes. This activity continued until 2000. Later there was a Kids' Club started by Sue Angel and Elaine Roberts assisted by Dorothy Craig and Ray Englert. When this tapered off the Club was revived later by June Hook and Elaine Roberts.

At one stage there was even a Pets' Service. People brought their pets to church. The local Vet, Phil Wilson, commented: "I never thought that I'd sit next to a chook in church."

From its inception the preschool was a community activity overseen by the church. The mounting governance and legal requirements and dwindling community numbers made it difficult for the voluntary Management Committee to function effectively and led to the decision that the preschool should be transferred to Uniting Early Learning. This transition was taking place as COVID swept across the world. This disruption meant that the full transition was not completed until early this year.

By the start of COVID it was recognised that there were some serious structural issues with the church foundations. Large cracks were appearing in the brickwork. Under the guidance of the late Rev Bob Willoughby and his capable wife, Val, engineers and builders were given the task of correcting these issues.

These works were largely done early in COVID times utilising funds from the earlier sale of the smaller churches.

With the disruption most activities were cancelled. Things like the monthly sing-along were cancelled. Unfortunately, in a changed world this activity has not been able to resume.

Recognising the changing world in which we live the congregation embarked on a deliberate program to explore where our new mission directions were leading. This was undertaken with input from both Synod and Presbytery. Small groups of the congregation met a number of times to acknowledge our history and explore where we should focus our future directions.

With the ending of the COVID disruptions there was also the recognition that the car park needed radical upgrading. This was explored with Uniting and engineers were engaged. The capital cost of this work was well beyond the capacity of this small and older congregation. Discussion also recognised that the principal stewardship of the various activities on the site here at 52 Park Ave needed to be rationalised and a cooperative framework developed into the future. As part of this exercise the physical assets of the Preschool devolved to Uniting Early Learning.

There is now a Memorandum of Understanding covering the Independent Living, Early Learning and the congregation. All signatories are part of the

Uniting Church. In this process there were some funds dispersed which has allowed the congregation to contribute to the significant capital works program. As the program wound up a significant effort was made to refresh the church building and its facilities. New paint, upgraded lighting, the installation of air conditioning and a new sound system have enhanced the congregation's experience along with new furniture in the church.

As a congregation we can now look forward to growing our community. We continue to have an active association with our community through things like the Craft and Chat group which meets on Wednesday mornings.

This transfer of assets has allowed the congregation to develop a position of a Community Engagement Coordinator. Funding is now available to ensure that this project can continue for a number of years.

The congregation has appointed Rebecca Arthur as our Community Engagement Coordinator to foster deeper community connections. Already Rebecca has connected with local groups, council contacts and the broader Church including Presbytery and Synod contacts. Recently the Crop Swap held each month during growing season attracted a lot of interest and visitors to our church. Future plans include playgroups in local parks where there are no community facilities for young families and a social group for board and card games. Both of these are planned to commence next year.

Guided by our motto of 'Faith, Community, Connection' we look forward to growing together in meaningful ways, building an inclusive and vibrant congregation.

## **READINGS**

- **Hebrews 10:11–14, 19–25**

<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, "he sat down at the right hand of God," <sup>13</sup> and since then has been waiting "until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet." <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), <sup>21</sup> and since

we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- **Mark 13:1–8**

13 As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” 2 Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.” 3 When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 4 “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” 5 Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. 7 When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. 8 For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

**HYMN 158** God has spoken by His prophets

**Sermon - Rev Stephen de Platter** Presbytery Chairperson

**HYMN 351** Lift high the cross

**PRAYERS FOR THE OFFERING**

God of all life, may the money we give here,  
the energy and time we give in all of our lives  
be a sign to us that you are with us,  
that you are in us and that you want to love through us.  
In the name of Christ,  
who is your great gift to all the world at all times.  
Amen.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - Leisa Steele**

Good morning Church Family!

Let us pray,  
Heavenly Father, As we reflect on Remembrance Day that has just gone,  
We give thanks to you, Lord God,  
for those who sacrificed so much and suffered so greatly so that we can  
enjoy the freedom and peace we have here in Australia today. We give  
thanks for the bravery and the victory they won so our lives now are much  
better for it. We give thanks to Jesus, who suffered greatly and won a  
victory over death, so that we can have forgiveness and eternal life. In the  
precious name of your beloved Son, Jesus,  
We say thank you. Amen.

Lord, We pray for peace to be restored in the Ukraine. We pray for God's  
wisdom for the world leaders as the situation in Israel, Palestine, Gaza,  
Lebanon and Iran escalates. We pray for peace in Southern Sudan,  
Afghanistan and Yemen!

Even amongst all this world turmoil and hatred, we pray for Gospel  
opportunities for Christians in those countries!  
We pray for God's wisdom and guidance for President Trump and his team.  
We pray for God's wisdom and guidance for our federal, state and local  
governments and that they would make policies and decisions which line  
up with God's Word.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Lord, we pray for good health, protection, healing for those who are  
vulnerable to illnesses around the world.  
We lift before you all healthcare workers and medical researchers to keep  
them strong, with endurance and  
perseverance.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Lord, A prayer for people facing difficulty, who are suffering in body, mind  
or spirit.

And we pray for a world that is free from poverty, injustice, prejudice,  
persecution and slavery.

Lord, In your mercy, hear our prayers.

We pray for deliverance for everyone whether it's from fear, temptation or difficult circumstances.

We trust that you will rescue us, set us free from anything that binds us and lead us into your peace.

Lord, in your mercy, hear their prayers.

A Little Food for thought!

What is Joy? By Henry Nouwen.

Joy is not the same as happiness. We can be unhappy about many things, but joy can still be there because it comes from the knowledge of God's love for us.

Joy needs hope!

There's an intimate relationship between joy and hope. While optimism makes us live as if someday soon things will get better for us, hope frees us from the need to predict the future, and allows us to live in the present with the deep trust that God will never leave us alone, but will fulfil the deepest desires of our heart.

Joy in this perspective is the fruit of hope. Amen.

Lord, Thank you for keeping us all safe and hidden from the darkness of this world in your amazing loving arms of light, love, peace, truth, grace and mercy. Thanks be to God.

In the name of your beloved Son, Christ Jesus.  
Amen.

Please join me in singing the Lord's prayer.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.



For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

**HYMN 650** Brother, sister, let me serve you

**BENEDICTION**

The regenerating earth is a sign of God's love.  
The hospitality of the faithful community is a sign of God's generosity.  
The scriptures are a sign of God's continued presence with us.  
The prayers of this day are a sign of God's hope within us.

Let us go today to be signs to ourselves of God's love,  
signs to each other of God's grace,  
and signs to our communities of God's justice.  
Amen.