


# NewView

<p>Glen Waverley Uniting Church Cnr Bogong Ave &amp; Kingsway Glen Waverley 3150 Ph 9560 3580 Email <a href="mailto:office@gwuc.org.au">office@gwuc.org.au</a></p> 	Organic Vision	2	Tradition	7	Dead Cert!	15
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The theme of this issue is 'Vision', since the recent deliberations of our council and other groups have been focused on drawing up a road map for us to follow for the next five years. The documents arising from these discussions (pp. 2-6) were presented to us at the Congregational Meeting on August 31, and are reproduced here so that we might see the total vision for our immediate future in Glen Waverley.

It is significant that the first document is titled '*Organic* Vision Document', indicating that this is to be a living response to our understanding of the needs of the world in which we live. Neil Peters reminds us that having a vision energises our endeavours, by clarifying our focus and unifying our efforts (p.7). Neil's piece is adjacent to a poem by Graeme Frecker, in which Graeme's consideration of tradition reminds us that we need to recognise that our vision did not spring spontaneously from the ether, but that what we see for our future arises from what has gone before: 'I am the framework for evolution...' (p.7).

Similarly, the story of Free Spirit's establishment (pp.13,14) arose from a response to a perceived new need for a contemporary musical style in worship. The eclectic range of Free Spirit's repertoire is acknowledgement of the wealth of material that has preceded its emergence.

Many of us find our connectedness by belonging to a smaller group (like Free Spirit) within the larger GWUC community. It is interesting to see that both members interviewed for our 'Getting to Know You' segment have each found their home with a smaller group sharing their interests and experiences. Meagan Lowe (pp. 8, 9) has many fond memories of her time growing up at GWUC and attending various youth activities, while Amy Proe (pp. 10-12) found her 'home' firstly with the choir, and now with the 8am worship group.

Our vision for the future will be built on the foundations already laid. Margaret Fraser has provided us with a pictorial record of Leisure Time's expansion this year (p.17). It is just one of many local outreach activities generated by The Hub missional group which serves the needs of our local Glen Waverley community.

Having a vision for new directions does not mean we abandon existing efforts. We must continue to nurture our GWUC community and to support it as we are able. The pictures of the spring clean and the Asian Dinner record differing ways in which we can help. Nurturing faith also continues to be a priority and Rohan Wickramaratne generously shares with us an experience from his faith journey.

As the piece about asylum seeker support reminds us, we must also remember that visions need to be financed to become more than meaningless dreams. It is up to each of us to determine the ways and means by which we can support the GWUC vision.

*Robin Pope*

# GWUC Organic Vision Document

GWUC is a faithful, Christ-centred community that meets God and shares unconditional love.

**We** have spent time together asking ourselves how we continue to live out our vision statement in a culturally relevant way.

We belong to a multicultural community and our ministry needs to reflect this.

We are committed to all our existing ministries, and would like to highlight that our Seniors, Children and Families and Youth and Young adults ministries are still a part of our vision and focus; and to reflect our community's demographics we especially need to grow in the latter two areas.

This is an organic, living document. It will change, with each season.

**We** have a diverse ministry that encourages and empowers individuals, families, youth and children to explore their faith and purpose in a community environment of unconditional love.

We offer a variety of worship services, communion, faith development, baptisms, weddings, funerals, small groups, faith exploration groups, bible studies, welfare, broadcasts, podcasts, gatherings, hospitality, english conversation classes, pastoral care, coffee and many other seasonal programs and ministries, for all ages and cultures.

In all we do, we aim to serve our community, our world and each other.

**Our** biblical understanding of the Church and her role centres around us loving God and loving our neighbour in all our communal activities.

Responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our local and global world, we strive to be a church reflecting Jesus' gospel message of love, grace and transformation.

**After** much prayer and conversation we have identified areas for growth, commitment and focus over the next 5 years.

We identified two **Internal** and two **External** areas.

## 1. Continuing to build connectedness and genuine community.

We build on our existing pastoral care, enriching our fellowship and strengthening our sense of community by

- Fostering relationships
- Small groups
- Pastoral care and pastoral partners
- Gatherings and events
- Intergenerational connections

## 2. Nurturing faith development, sharing, questioning and exploration.

We offer engaging worship along with opportunities to discover and explore faith in an environment where all are welcome wherever they are in their journey of life and faith, by

- Providing specified study groups
- Developing expressions of faith
- Diverse worship services, styles and times
- Broadcast Ministry
- Teaching
- Conferences, seminars and guest speakers

### 3. Kingsway Ministry.

We intentionally grow our ministry to our local multicultural community, by

- Reflecting our context's demographic
- Ensuring cultural diversity
- Intentional listening to and learning from other multicultural or ethnic specific church communities
- Building relationships by pastoral care and prayer support for Kingsway businesses
- Participating in Kingsway events. e.g. Chinese New Year
- Communicating and affirming by the use of Thank you cards and Christmas cards
- Utilising our grounds and facilities to enhance our ministry in Kingsway. e.g. Fete, Book sale
- Fostering relationships
- Navigating our diverse world
- Inviting people on the journey

### 4. Raising Glen Waverley Uniting Church's profile, by serving our local community.

We nurture partnerships to enable our congregation to grow our servant heart, by

- Partnering with schools, councils and clubs etc
- Reflecting our local demographic
- Talking to community organisations to identify needs within Glen Waverley
- Talking to global organisations to identify global concerns
- Empowering the disempowered
- Advocacy of community and global topics

We are committed to challenging ourselves by keeping our identified areas at the forefront of all we do, by continually asking ourselves if any new initiatives fit within our identified ministry areas.

To do this we will continually ask ourselves if we are honouring these areas in all we plan and do.

**We** are also encouraging all groups to create rhythms. We encourage each other to dream, wonder possibilities, to partnering with others and other areas of our community.

The process should include debriefing, asking what worked, what didn't and what could be improved. We should remember to celebrate the event and all those involved it.

**2014** was a new season here at Glen Waverley and the missional groups continued to be the life and ministry enablers of our congregation.

At the start of the year as requested by Church Council each Missional and Functional group shared their main objectives and goals. It is encouraging to see how these goals fit nicely into our newly identified areas and we look forward to seeing their initiatives for 2015 and beyond.

Next...

Read the full GWUC Organic Vision Document on the wiki.

Enabling our Vision, the 'Growing Faith, Reaching Community' campaign will begin in September.

Groups will form around interest in our identified areas, and begin to strategise.

Church Council will continue to look towards the future ministry and ministry team configurations on behalf of the congregation.

All documents can be found on the wiki or printed copies are available from the Church office.

# Growing Faith - Reaching Community

(Formerly known as Growing Generous Givers)

We, the people of God, in the Glen Waverley Uniting Church, a living church, have been given a VISION that has been brought about through prayer and deed – the Holy Spirit guiding the way.

What does our VISION need? It needs further prayer, discipleship and ‘means’ to grow the faith and reach out to the community. Part of the means is financial. God is a generous God, who provides for us in many ways. It is beholden on us to take some time to discern how we might respond to His generosity.

The reality of being a ‘living church’ is that our freewill offering needs to equate to or indeed exceed, our VISION implementation costs.

We are being asked to consider our stewardship in its many forms, in particular, our monetary stewardship, and to respond by completing a Commitment form, which includes this monetary stewardship.

The Commitment Program will be run over the first 3 Sundays in October.

- 5 Oct            Each Service will have a Growing Faith – Reaching Community component.
- 12 Oct            Between the 9.15 am and the 11.00 am Services there will be a special morning tea – in fact a ‘High Tea’.
- At 6.00 pm, between the 4.30 pm Children and Families’ worship and the 7.00 pm Youth worship, there will be a Bring Tea to Share meal.
- At these times, a couple of members of the congregation will give a short outline of their response to God’s love.
- 19 Oct            *Commitment Sunday:* This is the chance to return commitment forms. It is the day after the Fete and there will be opportunity to rejoice in God’s goodness to us.
- As the Treasurer needs financial information to complete the 2015 Budget for submission to the Congregation Meeting in November, it is vital to have the majority of commitment forms returned at this service or by the end of October.

In service to His WORD, we stand as one. We are able to make a difference.

*Growing Faith - Reaching Community Task Group, appointed by the Church Council*



# GWUC is maintaining a commitment to these strategic ministry areas



## LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT

Neil and the ministry team are excited to be working with Church Council, Missional Groups, Committees and other groups in this congregation to nurture members' faith, to offer engaging worship, to offer pastoral care and to share the love of God with all whom we meet in our community.

## CHILDREN AND FAMILY

Children and families ministry at GWUC aims to foster an environment where parents and children can develop in their faith, as individuals and also as family units, through providing a safe place for wondering together. Developing intergenerational relationships is vital in supporting families and individuals in growing a strong understanding of themselves as people of faith.

## YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

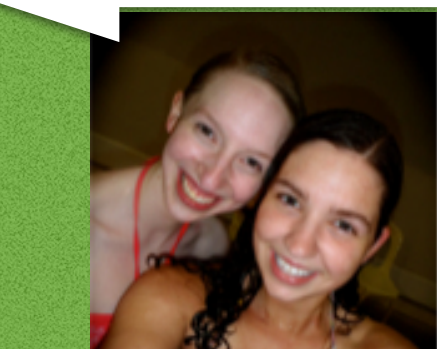
Enabling youth and young adults to explore faith in a relevant way in today's culture, by creating places to talk, question, experience community, and worship. Also enabling opportunities for acts of justice and mission, with a hands-on approach, meeting people where they are at.

## SENIORS

Ministry to Seniors aims to provide support to the senior members of our congregation by affirming their value and contribution to the life of our community and ministering to their specific needs. This ministry includes regular worship services at GWUC and services in local residential care facilities, seminars and pastoral care.

## Our Part

To move forward, we need to prayerfully discern our contributions - are we able to commit "to pray", "to assist with pastoral care and in other practical undertakings", "to increase our giving"?



Please place your response slip in an envelope (addressed to Mr Ken Hutchinson, Giving Recorder) and bring it to the Celebration and Commitment services (all 5 services) which will be held on **Sunday 19 October** (the day after the fete). If it is not possible to attend on that day then please place it in the offering plate the following week, or post and deliver your response to the Church Office.

**We are inviting everyone to respond as they are able.**

Tear along here.....

RESPONSE SLIP (please circle & fill out your responses)

I/We \_\_\_\_\_ would like to respond to the Growing Faith, Reaching Community challenge by pledging

Prayer commitment

Assisting on a roster

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Joining a missional group

Joining a Functional group

Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

A Practical Undertaking \_\_\_\_\_  
(this could be anything you think might be able to help/serve/grow/offer the church community)

After prayerful consideration I/we will give \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly/Monthly/OneOff  
(revised giving to commence from 1 January 2015)

by means of: Direct Debit / Envelope / Open Plate

I would like more information on giving to/by Direct Debit / Endowment Fund / Bequests / Specific Donation

## Vision and the Church

Over the years I have come to realize that some sermons are memorable. This highlights the responsibility I have as a Minister of the Word. I can recall a farewell sermon from a minister I admired when I was about 20 years old. He had three points to make in his sermon, which were three parting challenges to the congregation. I confess that I don't remember all three points but one point has stuck with me to this day. I actually met up with this minister about ten years ago and reminded him of this sermon and the impact it had on me.

The point that I remember was from Proverbs 29:18a. In the King James Bible, which was the wording used by the minister, it says 'Where there is no vision, the people perish...'. I remember seeing a modern wording of this verse a few years ago which said, 'Where there is no vision the people do their own thing...'. The New Revised Standard Version says, 'Where there is no prophecy the people cast off restraint...'.

I believe that vision or direction within a church community needs to be discerned by the people of the congregation before God. When a congregation is discerning vision it is important to listen for the voice of God through the Scriptures, through prayer, reflection and by listening deeply to one another. We listen for God in the process of discernment because we are a part of God's church. It is God's mission that we share in. It is the Spirit of God who equips and empowers us to fulfil the God-given mission that we share in.

Having a sense of vision and direction helps us as a congregation to move forward together. It helps us work together rather than be pulling in different directions. It helps give focus for members to be able use their gifts and talents. In my experience having a vision can give energy and life to the Body of Christ. It helps to remove a sense that we are just doing the same old things over and over again.

Once a vision has been discerned before God we need to take steps to ensure that it is enacted. To have a vision discerned and named, and then allow it to simply gather dust on a shelf somewhere simply leads to frustration and a lack of enthusiasm for any future discernment work around vision.

We need to remember as a church we are about God's work and that we are making a contribution to building the Kingdom of God. Before God, and with each other, let us continue to dream, discern the vision God has for us and move forward confidently to live out that vision as part of the Body of Christ here at Glen Waverley Uniting

### TRADITION

Job 8 (*Good News Translation*)

<sup>8</sup> *Look for a moment at ancient wisdom;  
consider the truths our ancestors learned.*

<sup>9</sup> *Our life is short, we know nothing at all;  
we pass like shadows across the earth.*

<sup>10</sup> *But let the ancient wise people teach you;  
listen to what they had to say: ...*

I am the distilled wisdom of the ages.  
I am the harvest of the travails of time.  
I am the foodstuff of the sages.  
I am the storehouse of truths sublime.

I bring sure succour to the commons.  
I lend stability in ever-present strife.  
I offer guidance to anyone who summons.  
I hold lessons vital for a satisfying life.

Yet Yesterday I was the scoffers' target.  
Today I look olden style, the scoffers say  
as they seek new fashions in the market.  
Tomorrow's scoffers ever mock Today.

Throw off the Old! put on the New!  
The scoffers may oft reclothe my frame,  
but unseen beneath their shallow view  
I live on renewed, still much the same.

I am the framework for evolution.  
I am the base camp for high adventure.  
I am the birthing place for innovation.  
I am tradition, the wellspring of the future.

*Graeme Frecker June 2014*

## Getting to Know You: Meagan Lowe

*Meagan Lowe has been an active member of Glen Waverley Uniting Church for almost her whole life. Having shared her gifts selflessly and passionately in the church's music, youth and outreach programs for many years, Meagan is now expanding her horizons to across the Tasman. Jacob Davey sat down with Meagan (at their computers in their respective countries!) to gain an insight into what has shaped her into the person she is today, and what the future has in store.*

### **Tell us about your childhood and some of your early memories**

I grew up in Mount Waverley and have always attended church with my family - Murray, Judy and my sister Bron. The GWUC community has been a massive part of my life; in fact, I was the first baby baptised in the new Church building back in 1991! I have so many fond memories of KUCA camps, youth group, NCYCs and so many more adventures and experiences I have shared with people at GWUC.

### **What were your hobbies and favourite subjects at school?**

As for hobbies growing up, I didn't really care much for dolls or dresses – instead I loved dinosaurs, reading science books, and building creations of Lego, Knex or any other material. I've always loved exploring the outdoors, and some of my most cherished memories are from our family's annual camping trips with the Laubs and Gotches. I also did gymnastics and acrobatics for many years, and worried my parents with the various injuries I acquired!

My favourite subject at high school was Geography, though I enjoyed all my subjects and has some great teachers. I pursued studies in Geography through to University and finally my honours research in coastal science in 2012.

### **Which people have had a significant influence on the person you are today?**

I have been lucky to have had many mentors and friends over my life who have encouraged me, challenged me, and shaped me into who I am today. My high school English teacher became a great friend and support, who challenged me to look beyond the black and white to the tricky questions of life and morality.

Julian Hamilton's time ministering at GWUC in 2005 was significant for my own faith development, and was probably the turning point for me actively choosing to follow Christ, and not just because it was my upbringing. I was confirmed under Alanee's guidance and wisdom the following year, and she has remained a great friend and support, and an inspiration through both her words and actions.

My incredible family and close friends have had perhaps the greatest influence on who I am today. They encourage me to be the best I can be, inspire me with the amazing things they do, and in turn believe that I can and am doing amazing things too. I couldn't ask for a better group of people to have shared my life with so far.

### **You've spent a lot of time building connections with the people of Baguia in East Timor. What have been some of the most rewarding aspects of these relationships?**

I first heard of Baguia ten years ago as a Year 8 at school – we were asked to write penpal letters to students in East Timor. Somehow the place and the people caught my curiosity, and I began learning more about the country, started fundraising and eventually joined the committee of Friends of Baguia (the Stonnington-based community group through which we are connected).

I've now travelled to Baguia 3 times, and have plans to go again next year. Recently we hosted Leopoldina Guterres, the English teacher from Baguia, and she spoke briefly at the 9:15am service on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Her request for second-hand musical instruments was met with amazing enthusiasm and generosity, and your donations are now packed and ready to be shipped to Timor! A huge thank you to everyone; these donations will be received with so much excitement.

It's incredible to be a part of these small miracles, where an idea is seeded and suddenly everyone pulls together to make a difference. However on a personal level – to be accepted into a community, to be called family, and to have found such amazing friends and connections who we can work with to build a better future – this is what keeps me coming back to Baguia.



## Getting to Know You: Meagan Lowe

**Shifting now to another close neighbour of Australia, you've just moved over to live in New Zealand! What has led you there and what plans/dreams do you have for life in NZ?**

I'm actually writing this from my new home in Wellington New Zealand, where I have moved to be with my partner, Nick. True to form it's windy and rainy outside! Nick and I met two and a half years ago when we were both studying coastal science under the same professor, though in different countries. Though I miss my family and everyone at home tremendously, it is a fantastic opportunity for me to explore a new place, meet new people and tackle new challenges.

Nick and I are both currently working as consultants to Surf Life Saving New Zealand undertaking a series of risk assessments to reduce the risk of drowning and injury on beaches around the country. The beautiful New Zealand coastline is certainly not a bad workplace!

Dreams for the future would be to expand my work to help communities become more resilient to the effects of climate change and natural disasters on the coast. I'm looking at starting a PhD in the next few years, hopefully something in this same field.

So while I'm a bit further away now, I'm still thinking of everyone back home at GWUC – I still read the weekly bulletins in my emails. You'll see me every now and then when I visit Melbourne, and I love hearing the news of what the church community is up to. Till next time!

Meagan

*Interviewed by Jacob Davey*



*We rejoice with the following members of our church family:*

*Irene Marriott, who celebrated her 101st birthday*

*Eileen Scott, who celebrated her 80th birthday*

*Diana Thorpe, celebrating her 75th birthday*

*Peter Baker, who celebrated his 70th birthday*

*Ross Lennon, celebrating his 80th birthday*

*Rebecca and Peter Cornall and Oliver, who welcomed baby Charlotte May to their family*

*Barbara and John Hurst, who welcomed their first grandchild, Jemima Joan, to their family*

*Deaconess Margaret Allan celebrating 60 years' service as a Deaconess*

*Rev Dr Fred Vanclay celebrating 50 years of Ordination*

*The McKellar family, who have been accepted as permanent residents in Australia*

## Getting to Know You: Amy Proe



Hearing the story of Amy Proe's life, one is immediately struck by the opportunities provided by the gift of good health and adherence to values of hard work and caring for the needs of others, through good times and bad.

### Early Life

Born in Townsville in 1923, a younger sister to Alice (born 1920), Amy spent her first ten years in Pentland, a tiny town (population about 200) 250k SW of Townsville in north Queensland. Her schooling began in Pentland at the one-teacher school, and Amy can remember taking Wednesday mornings off from school to assist her mother prepare her father's 'tucker tin'. These food supplies were sent to him to his current work location on the railways, to last him until the weekend. This shared involvement with her mother had a lasting influence on Amy, whose love of cooking and needlework she attributes to her mother's nurturing and guidance. Amy remembers sitting at night around the kerosene lamp (no electricity) sewing, working at her 'fancy work', as embroidery was then called. She also remembers learning to sew on the treadle machine, and making her first item, a pillowcase. Disposable income was scarce in those days and clothing shops were the province of the wealthy, so her mother made all the girls' pretty dresses and other garments, as well as using her crochet skills to enhance her needlework.

At the age of 10, life was irrevocably changed

for Amy by the early death of her mother. Her father worked away from home wherever a job could be found, and Amy and her sister Alice were still in need of care. At first her grandparents provided this support, and then for 18 months the girls lived with an aunt and uncle in Babinda, about 60k from Cairns. When Amy was about 12 years old, her sister returned home to Pentland to housekeep for her father, and Amy was sent 'for refinement' to St Gabriel's, a convent in Charters Towers. This was a bleak time, as she was desperately homesick and lonely without her sister. She was overwhelmed by Alice's gesture of sending her a fruit cake from home, and this reminder of her family and home was the one bright spot in her time there. Amy then took her turn at home as housekeeper for her Dad until she was 18, and Alice went to work at a health clinic on the Atherton Tablelands.

World War Two was in progress when Amy turned 18. Alice returned to Pentland to fetch Amy to work at the clinic where she had been working. This had been established by Ernest Kjellberg a migrant Swedish chiropractor whose personal interest in holistic medicine had led him initially to work at the Seventh Day Adventist Sanitarium at Wahroonga in Sydney, and then to study at Sydney University to attain recognised Australian qualifications. But World War One interrupted his studies, his German-sounding name brought harassment and he retreated with his family to a bush block he had bought and cleared at Millaa Millaa on the Atherton Tableland. His skills as a healer, using a new manual therapy, gradually attracted many people seeking help (especially those affected by the polio epidemic), and as he turned no-one away a small community gradually grew up around his home, called 'Beachview'. During the 1920s and 1930s Beachview grew from a tent city to a clinic with expanded treatment rooms and accommodation for patients, many of whom stayed on to help and learn. It was to this community, numbering between three and four hundred people, that Amy was taken by Alice in 1941. Kjellberg was a man ahead of his time by about a century, for massage, manipulation and manual therapy were very much on the fringe of the Western medical world then, and were generally regarded as quackery. At Beachview Amy was taught some of the skills of manual therapy which Kjellberg used in treatment, for it was his practice to pass on his skills to others. Amy regards her 12 years spent there on the staff as the most rewarding and valuable years of her life, working in a community in which neither race nor wealth were used to discriminate, but was accepting of all who came in need. She has been able to continue these skills with her family, later in her life.

# Getting to Know You: Amy Proe

## Family Life

While working at the Beachview Clinic, Amy met her husband Jim, who worked for the International Harvester Company, an agricultural machine manufacturer. Soon after they married in 1954, Jim and Amy were sent to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) where they spent the first 18 months of their married life. A transfer back to Sydney is remembered for the arrival of their eldest son David; and then after a shift to Perth, Robert and Julie were welcomed to the family. Long service leave came while in Perth, and this was spent on the Gold Coast, travelling there by car. In 1960, the road across the Nullarbor was then unsealed, and the fine red dust of the desert was kept out of the car by sealing every door but the driver's, through which the whole family had to climb to enter and exit at every stop! During their return journey to Perth Jim was transferred back to Sydney where John, the youngest of their four children, was born. A move to Adelaide after another 18 month stint finally brought some stability for the family, for there they stayed for about 6 years. While in Adelaide Amy joined a church choir, having been introduced to it by our Sue Morgan's mother! This began a long association with music and worship.

By the time they moved to Melbourne in 1969, David was in high school and the younger children were attending primary school. Now, after all the earlier transfers, they put down deep roots. The family moved in to their house in Glen Waverley where Amy has lived ever since.

After about 10 years in Glen Waverley Jim began to plan for his future retirement. Having been involved in the farming industry for all those years, he dreamed of spending his retired years on a farm of his own. They purchased 'Attunga', 100 acres with only a leaning shed on it, near Seaton on the Walhalla Road. A house was purchased and brought there from the Latrobe Valley. Emptying the cavities of coal dust was a major task to make it habitable! The following three years were spent improving the farm, with local help and that of the family and their friends. Paddocks were fenced; the 10 dams were installed; cattle were purchased, then a horse and foals. During those years Amy had often to be there to take care of the work being done so she frequently made the two and a half hour journey from the city to the country. But Jim's dream was not to be fulfilled for himself. In 1982, nine weeks after a diagnosis of cancer, he passed away.

However, Amy decided to keep the farm going and to realise Jim's dream for the family; so it continued to be a venue for some memorable family gatherings at Christmas and Easter, often shared with friends. Bushfires threatened their sanctuary in 1982, but it survived and continued to be enjoyed by the family until 1997, when it was finally sold. Amy continued to visit weekly for all those years, a testament to her energy.

Meanwhile her family has grown. She is fortunate in that her children all live in Melbourne, and four grandchildren have augmented the family numbers: Megan(21), Benjamin(16), Liam(13) and Thomas(11).

## Church Life

Tiny Pentland where Amy spent her early years had no church. Occasional visits by the 'Bush Brothers' were a rare event, when a card with a picture and text was distributed. Amy's husband Jim had been brought up in the Methodist tradition, and this began Amy's church connection. In her first week in Glen Waverley, Rev Arthur Ellemor came to visit, and soon Amy had joined the choir, and the children were attending Sunday School at the Springvale Road Methodist Church. She became involved in the Women's Guild, taking her turn as Secretary and then President. She has been on the flower roster for many years, a contribution she still makes. A highlight of those early Glen Waverley years was the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977, and the parade along Kingsway to Treseder Hall. On reflecting on the changes which have occurred over her 45 years in the Glen Waverley church, she notes that church seems to provide more enjoyment these days. She attributes this to the range of groups meeting the varied needs of the congregation, and is pleased to see a recognition that different paths can achieve the same ends. The many challenges facing young people today are quite different from those confronting Amy's children, and she watches this new world open to her grandchildren with concern.

## Getting to Know You: Amy Proe

Music and fellowship have featured strongly in Amy's church life. Her greatest delight has been in her choir membership, which she maintained for 35 years with only a few breaks. She remembers with pleasure the satisfaction of their performances of *The Messiah* at the Police Academy. Leaving the choir at age 85 she felt unsettled at first, as music had become such a natural expression of the sacred in her life. Eventually she found a spiritual anchor in the 8am services which she now attends regularly. It provides an intimacy which the fellowship of the choir had formerly provided.

Age has not slowed Amy down. She played outdoor bowls for 25 years, but a ligament injury three years ago forced the concession of transferring to indoor bowls where the bowls are lighter and smaller. She noted that they can also play year-round, which is a bonus!

Visiting Amy in the home where she and Jim raised their family is to see evidence of her full life: an organ is a reminder of her love of music; the spinning wheel is a memento of earlier craft skills; the walls displaying beautiful tapestries are examples of her needlework; the garden is living evidence of her talents in producing the flowers she loves. Some of the bedrooms once occupied by her children are now available for the visiting family, and others are rededicated to current activities such as sewing.

While the world has changed a great deal during Amy's long life, we might also remind ourselves that people's lives have had to adapt accordingly. We live longer, and our quality of life in our later years is quite different. Don't expect to find Amy sitting at home hoping for a phone call or for visitors to drop in because she's 91 and sitting in a rocking chair. She's more likely to be visiting someone herself; or working in her garden; or cooking up a storm in her kitchen; or playing bowls; or arranging the flowers at the church. Amy shows us what life can be at 91, when blessed with good health, a network of caring family and friends, and a range of interests which engage the heart and body.

*Robin Pope*



Free Spirit at Boronia UC on August 24 2014, L to R:

Back row: Alan Cook, Max Thomson, Steven Emms, Russell Lang, John Snare, Michael Foo, Louise Edgoose, Jacob Davey, Yan Emms (hidden!), Geoff Willis, Kaye Morgan;

Centre row: Jo Boldiston, Lyn Maslen, Jesse Lang, Robin Pope, Alison Cook, Marj Snare, Linda Li, Deborah Leigh;

Front row: Irene Merta, Jenny Abraham, Irene Merta, Lise Hales, Maria Gillies, Vida Foo, Joy Allen, Lois Hosking, Helen Jackson. Absent: Noelle Gibson, Lynn Peters, Elwyn Pederson.

## Singing a New Song: Free Spirit's Story

'Music can warm the soul and bring us closer to the Lord!' These are the opening words of the Free Spirit historical records, and they continue to inspire its members as much now as they did when the choir was first formed in 1983 or 1984. Initially it comprised a small group of seven (Alan Cook, Caroline Cook, Jay Robinson, Mandy Burns, Joy Allen, Sue (Podger) Hocking, Rob Hocking and accompanist Margaret Lemke) who were interested in introducing some contemporary sacred music as an alternative style of music for worship at Glen Waverley Uniting Church. Their first performance at GWUC was of the song 'Teach Us Your Way'. Although they did not sing on a regular basis, they sang often enough to decide they needed a moniker, and 'Free Spirit', suggested by Jay Robinson, was born.

In the early days, the singers were often accompanied by a small band - piano, drums, clarinet or sax, and sometimes electric guitar. Slowly, occasional two part harmony became four part harmony (and sometimes up to 8 parts) with just piano accompaniment. The foundation group was soon joined in the 1980s by others, and like founding members Alan Cook and Joy Allen, some of them (Marj and John Snare, Maria Gillies) have stayed with the group, while others have moved on to different places, or different activities; and some, like Jo (Wagon) Boldiston have moved away and come back! Over the years the choir has had a membership of nearly 100 different people, including many current GWUC members such as Lesley Armstrong, Lyn McDonald, Peter Baker, John Muir, Barbara Kreiger and others.

Free Spirit's desire to share the joy of music with others, both in worship and on other occasions, has been fulfilled from its inception. In the 1980s they helped out with the children's musicals *Cool in the Furnace* I and II, for which Geoff Pope wrote parts for an augmented instrumental accompaniment. In 1989 they shared their music with the inmates at Pentridge Gaol. By 1993 their performance records show that they were frequently visiting other churches, singing at the occasional wedding, and providing entertainment at retirement villages.

Initially the choir had no conductor, and was accompanied on piano by a number of different people: Margaret Lemke, Sue (Podger) Hocking, Jean (Henderson) Mitt and Margery Pope all assisted in this way. By 1988 Deborah (Pope) Leigh

was the regular accompanist and conductor. The choir gradually expanded its repertoire from contemporary gospel into African rhythms, and jazz blues/swing, and the membership grew to just over 20. But in 1995 Deborah left to work in the United States, and the choir fell on hard times. Choir records show a much diminished program, and the AGM minutes record the many efforts made to secure a new leader. By late 1995 they were overjoyed to welcome a new leader, Debrah Smith; but after only a short period ill health forced her to retire. In 1996 a number of performances occurred but by 1997 several attempts at continuing were unsuccessful and no record of performances survives.

When Deborah returned from the US in 1998 the choir eagerly reformed and planned the year ahead. They formally re-established their practice of singing 'at home' at GWUC once a month, and singing 'outside' once a month. That year, they also challenged their musical skills by entering a group in the Waverley Eisteddfod, as well as singing at three weddings. The following year saw the first participation in the Monash Ecumenical Choral Service, which has been a much-enjoyed annual event since then. By the end of that year the choir considered asking members for an annual donation towards the expenses of buying new music, and this has remained a practice. It began as \$10 a year (1999) and currently stands at \$25 for 6 months, which enables Free Spirit to make no demands on the church budget for support.

By the year 2000 the minutes of the AGM show the difficulties of operating successfully as a voluntary choir in a world in which people have many commitments and pressures. Members were urged to be committed to rehearsal attendance, so that unnecessary time was not spent going over music for the benefit of those who had been absent. 'Regulars get bored re-learning the same thing each week', it was recorded. It was suggested that non-attendance at the two rehearsals prior to a performance would exclude members from participating in the event, so that a satisfactory level of performance could be expected.

The year 2000 was also the first year that the choir travelled to country Victoria to share in worship and provide a fund-raising concert. At Euroa they were billeted out and despite the freezing winter temperatures at Terip Ruffy, were warmed by the

## Singing a New Song: Free Spirit's Story

marvellous country hospitality (which was repeated in 2002).

Since then, the records show an increasing number of visits to other churches and community venues. These experiences raised new issues, recorded in the 2005 minutes, when it was decided to accept no further invitations to sing outdoors, as the choir had been consistently let down by inadequate sound systems. The carols at Jells Park were fresh in the memory, when the choir, seated *behind* a 50+ piece band, had been expected to compete with little amplification!

Gradually the choir expanded its repertoire by growing musically. For several years small groups were entered into Waverley or Boroondara Eisteddfods, and the judges' comments were useful in helping to refine techniques. Madrigals (and the pseudo-madrigals of PDQ Bach) were tackled, and singing from memory was slowly introduced so that the conductor could command full attention. '*Just as well!*' say the choir minutes. '*Deb needed all her hands (plus a fair amount of the rest of her body) to conduct and lead Free Spirit through the challenges...*'. Those of our readers who have seen her conduct will understand, although the congregation is often unaware that she also 'mouths' the words, so that those with faulty memories have become skilled at lip-syncing!

Free Spirit has offered its services towards 'warming the soul' without cost. Where payment has been made the monies have been passed on to church projects. Since that first foray to Euroa, concerts have been held almost annually, sometimes in conjunction with the Parish Orchestra. The concerts occurred mostly at GWUC, where the money has been used for local parish projects. Often they have been repeated at other churches (Boronia, New Hope, Blackburn UC, St Andrews Box Hill, Brighton, Forest Hill UC, Burwood UC, Colac among others), raising money for the Share Appeal, Habitat for Humanity, Hotham Asylum Seeker Project, school chaplaincy programs, mental health ministry and other needy causes. In 2009, three concerts raised \$6582. Precise records were not always made, but over \$15000 is recorded as having been raised since 2007. Another large source of income for GWUC has been through the production of two CDs, in

2002 and 2004. The second, *Singing With Spirit* contributed \$6,365 to the parish project in total.

The CD recordings proved a new and often fraught experience! However we each have happier memories of particular performances, and of particular contacts made. The Dog Thanksgiving Services at Dingley, when some of the dogs joined in the singing, are fondly recalled. Regular services with seniors worship, and visits to retirement villages, together with the annual Ecumenical Choral Services are also savoured.

In recent years Free Spirit has grown to about 30 members, some of whom attend other churches but have found their musical 'home' with us. We include folk who have additional musical skills which they have generously contributed to our performances. When singing at GWUC, Geoff Willis also plays the organ for the service. When Deb was on maternity leave, Philippa (Hillman) Laub capably kept the choir going without a break. Lyn Maslen has accompanied on piano, clarinet and saxophone. Recently, we have also been assisted technologically by Russell Lang and John Snare, when monitors have been used as prompts. Graham Pottenger, a past member, materially assisted by donating a new keyboard, and making risers for the back line. Members give generously of time and talents, being aware that what they give is amply repaid in fellowship and the joys of making music together. And, of course, there is the pleasure of Tim Tams for supper!

If you enjoy making music with others, Deb reminds you that we are always looking for people who are willing to commit to regular rehearsal and performance and are ready to join a great group of people who fellowship with vigour together!



Compiled from information from Alan Cook, John Snare and Robin Pope

## Dead Cert!

‘Unfortunately we measure the value of life by quantity and not quality,’ said the priest at the remembrance service of a dearly loved friend of ours. She was thirty one years old, had a 2 year old child and had recently moved into a newly built house with her beloved husband. She suddenly fell ill and in three days, she was dead. Died in her husband’s arms.

I do not remember exactly all of what the priest said, but from what I do remember I would ask: Why do we measure people’s lives in quantity and not with quality? God has given us eternal life in caskets called bodies for a temporary time for us to learn about God’s love toward us. And we have forgotten that we are created to have an everlasting life with God. So the priest said, ‘Ask yourselves whether it is the quantity or quality of years that we live that matters.’

Jesus himself said to us, ‘Look at the birds. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you more worthy than they?’ So why worry? So what keeps us from living quality lives each hour of the day?

Sri Lanka went through a thirty year ethnic war. At the beginning the majority Sinhalese, supported by the Sinhala government, massacred the Tamils. I was studying in my second year at university in the city. The island was under curfew, but mobs were burning Tamil residences aided by the government electoral list, and beating up the Tamils mercilessly and sometimes killing them. One day, I was rushing home on my bicycle when I saw a young man being beaten up by a man using a thick pole, with the mob jeering at him and a soldier with a gun just standing by. Watching the scene, I wanted to intervene but my flesh was weak, and I peddled away. To this day I ask myself, ‘Should have I intervened?’ I will regret this inaction till my dying moment.

During this period of violence my friends and I went about doing what we could, trying to safeguard the people we knew, caring for them with a few pieces of bread and stuff (there were lots of shortages and bread queues were yards long) and on these occasions I lost faith in God: God The Creator, God the Sustainer, God The Saviour, God The Righteous Judge.

As a Christian group in the university we had had lots of debates and talks about the reality of a Creator and a Sustainer God who came to us to show the Way, the Truth and the Light. Our work of Evangelism was fierce, because we knew that if our identities were formed by what we do and not who we are in God, we fail the society around us. We ‘fought’ the various ‘isms’ (atheism, secularism, etc. etc.) around us, to know for ourselves that truth and the urgency to share that truth. But then, looking at the carnage around me, all that died.

Then I was reminded of something that picked me up then (and picks me up every moment) when I am in Sheol (Hell): **Is Jesus alive today or not?**

And each time the answer is ‘Yes’. He is alive. Amidst the carnage, blood and flesh, ‘Yes’. He is alive. If he is alive, then what God said to Cain will still apply. ‘Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground’ (Genesis 4:10). And I am comforted. The Righteous Judge will judge us but not as finicky, puny, wavering, ambitious, human beings. The Creator will judge what the Creator created, because it is only the Creator who can know the created, through and through.

But how do I know whether this ‘truth’ is a figment of my imagination? Is it just to make me have ‘Peace in my heart and to hell with the others around me?’ Is it an invention of the so called Christians to line their pockets? Is it to set up ‘Christian’ institutions, to travel around the world and be awarded meritorious awards? How do I know whether the Bible is an invention of the Western governments to brainwash people to think only of a heaven and never to care about the injustices in the world around them or to fight and dethrone tyrants in this world?

## Dead Cert!

A countless number of times, students in Sri Lanka used to come and ask us to prove that God exists and we were very busy trying to answer and articulate that God does exist. It just exhausted us. We knew then that they were having fun watching us rattle through all what we knew to be truth but they were not serious at all in considering what we were saying. To put it in another way – they listened to us talk while the food was being digested in their stomachs!

Then we changed our 'strategy'.

We put questions to those who came to ask us questions.

We asked them to prove that the Tomb where Jesus was laid was not empty, that Jesus did not rise from the dead. We would begin with these questions.

In history there is a character called Jesus. Christians believe he is still living today, after His crucifixion (death on a cross) by the Roman Government. The questions we asked were:

1. Did a man called Jesus really live? (Internal evidence: Bible, Church history etc.; External evidence : Other Historians, changes in governments etc.)?
2. Did He die on the Cross or is it possible He simply fainted (later revived by the coolness in the cave, He rolled the stone away and came out and went to India and died there)?
3. Is it possible that the disciples came at night to the tomb, took Jesus' body away and buried him somewhere else (because they were claiming that Jesus is alive and someone might discredit them by producing His body or because they would be laughed at for claiming that Jesus was alive)?
4. Or did the religious leaders who sent Jesus to death, steal his body (so that if the disciples were claiming that Jesus was alive they could produce the body to discredit them or just in case Jesus actually rose, they could see to it that He did not last)?
5. Or did the Roman government take away Jesus' body in the fear of what He said and the possibility that He might rise from the dead and topple the government etc.?
6. Is it possible that God did not allow Jesus to die? Perhaps God substituted another man in the place of Jesus on the cross and made that man die?

We asked our friends to do their own work to find true faith, answering the questions above, and some did and they are now some of the strongest Christian leaders in our part of the world because they know for themselves (personally) that Jesus lives. They needed to find out for themselves (first hand) if there is any other plausible explanation of what happened to Jesus or is the only explanation to the empty tomb, the truth that Jesus did indeed die and rise again. And reigns in Christian hearts today!

For my part, I am sure of the empty tomb. I am 'dead' sure!

**Are you?**

Rohan Wickramaratne



# Community Hub: Leisure Time

A friendly day out for seniors wanting company - every Monday at GWUC

We are pleased to have welcomed 6 new guests so far in 2014 - Helga, Eva, Ramila, Panna, (plus Elsie & Marie)



Happy days with good company, good food and a range of interesting activities and outings



*Have a  
nice day!*

We would be glad to hear of new volunteers or new guests. Please contact via the Church Office. Leisure Time is part of the Community Hub Missional Group and is open to all in our community.

# Missional News: Outreach

## Asylum Seeker Support Update

Lentara UnitingCare now manages the Asylum Seeker Program (formerly run by Hotham), and program manager Mohammed Isah spoke at GWUC one Sunday recently.

Following a query from the OEASSN (Outer East Asylum Seeker Support Network) of which GWUC is a member, Lentara has advised details of the total costs for one year, from all sources, in supporting the 3 houses and 12 residents with which OEASSN is involved. These houses are located in Ringwood and Heathmont.

The total costs now exceed \$120,000 p.a. and comprise:

- \$60,000 Case Workers (salaries + on-costs), an essential part of caring and support.
- \$17,000 Rental of Heathmont house (the other houses are provided rent free).
- 10,500 Utilities & Maintenance
- 29,000 Basic Living Allowances ( \$5 per day) and Myki cards to assist travel.
- 3,500 Emergency relief including medical costs. Medicare benefits not available.

The aim of OEASSN has been to fully cover the 'direct' asylum seeker costs, such as rent, emergency relief etc. However current giving, through OEASSN or made directly to Lentara is running at less than \$30,000 p.a and falling. The increasing shortfall is attributed in part to ageing congregations with less resources, and lower proceeds from special efforts. Also, a significant number of those who originally committed to monthly contributions (over 10 years ago!) have since died.

Although GWUC has made annual grants through the COP process, opportunities always exist for individuals/groups to make specific, one-off contributions, via OEASSN/Lentara. In particular, rent-free housing even for 12 months is a huge help in reducing the cost pressures on Lentara.

OEASSN convener Rev Graham McAnalley has asked participating churches to contemplate how we can increase our giving, to better meet the above commitment. Suggestions and/or offers of assistance should be passed to GWUC members (Heather Wilkins, Geoff Willis, Bobbie Rooks, Maria Gillies, Lyn Maslen, Fairlie Mackinnon).

An email from Jill Ruzbacky, of the Justice and International Mission Unit of the Uniting Church Victoria/Tasmania Synod on Tuesday September 23, emphasises this urgent need for support for asylum seekers and informs supporters that

*'...current demand for asylum seeker aid has increased significantly and far outstrips the capacity of UnitingCare agencies to provide adequate relief. **Many asylum seekers are being turned away due to lack of basic resources.***

*'It has now escalated into a crisis situation, with many agencies having very limited or no financial resources available for asylum seeker programs. SHARE urgently needs to raise funds to enable agencies to provide relief to asylum seekers living in emergency conditions.*

*'Donate online [www.shareappeal.org.au](http://www.shareappeal.org.au) or print the attached flyer. Money raised will be distributed across several different UnitingCare agencies who are providing support for asylum seekers.'*

*Geoff Willis*

*Ed footnote: GWUC has made a significant contribution to OEASSN costs over the years through our donations from the COP project (monies raised from our fete). We have been allocated a further \$2600 in 2014. These have been much appreciated by both Hotham and Lentara.*

# GWUC at Work and Play

Spring Cleaning  
at GWUC  
August 23 2014



At the Asian Dinner  
Saturday  
September 20 2014



for everything there is a season  
and a time for every matter under heaven

*We record with sadness the deaths in the past months of members of our church family and we extend our support and sympathy to their families*

*Florence Isabella Gray*

*Helen Joan Sloane*

*Winifred Ruth Mack*

*Rupamalar Singham*

*Peter Hastings Thorpe*

*Hazel Rosalie Davis*

*Rosalind Nixon*

*We celebrate the marriage of*

*Michael Aaron Sullivan and Nicole Kerri Morgan*

*Gary William Woodward and Karen Aleyne Woodruff*

*We record with joy the baptism of*

*Ashton John Horton*