

NewView

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Journeying

Neil's Musings	2
Journeying in Faith	3
Other Journeying:	
Laele Pepper	4
Anne Eelderink's Journeying	5
Bill Morgan's Journeying	8

'To the End'	8
Getting to Know Your Church	9
An Islamic Nativity	10
'In Life Be Sure'	11
2015 Fete	12
Burnside at HSRUC	14
Updates from J.I.M.	15

Hub Morning Tea	17
Sammy Stamp	17
Book Review	18
Outreach Lunch Forum	20
Day for Reflection	21
Reflection on Luke	22
Pastoral Notes	24

Forgive me for a rudimentary grammatical indulgence! A **journey** describes an act, representing movement from one place to another, so in grammatical terminology it is a noun. Once a journey is completed we can reflect upon the events of that journey, but the actual events are fixed in the past — even though we might alter our perception and interpretation of those events later on. We also have a verb form of the noun: 'to journey'. The participle of that verb, **journeying**, implies a continuous action of the verb 'to journey', and therefore there is the implication that change is possible, and that nothing is fixed until the journey is over and the action completed. It is for that reason that the theme of this issue is not 'journeys' but '**journeying**' (which functions as a noun), for until our life journey is completed we are all open to the possibility of change.

Our theme of **journeying** is particularly apt for GWUC at this time, as we plan the road to the future for our church. Neil's Musings informs us of proposals for future directions, while our book review takes up the matter of our church's journey towards the future, and provides ideas for consideration.

Our life journeys bring different locations, relationships and experiences and these influence the person we become. At GWUC, we hold Christianity as the prism through which we view those locations, relationships and experiences, although our understanding of exactly what that means to us individually will vary.

This issue is rich in examples of journeying which can inspire us, when we find out what others are doing on their journey. The journeying of Berlin Guerrero, Laele Pepper, Anne Eelderink and Bill Morgan can all inspire us - in faithfulness, in persistence, in courage, in demonstrations of love and compassion, in skills acquired, and in other ways significant to us individually.

Additionally we have poetic meditations on how we use the time in our journeying, and there is an invitation from activists at the Justice and International Mission Unit to use our gift of time thinking about and supporting those who have needs which are not being addressed.

There are also reports of many events, large and small, which have taken place at GWUC in the last three months. Since this is such a busy community we are not able to attend everything, but through *NewView* we can learn about other activities and perhaps direct others to them, or even try new things out for ourselves. We have a new segment 'Getting to Know Your Church' which gives small groups the opportunity to tell others about what they do, and we encourage you to contribute something about your group to future issues.

Robin Pope

Neil's Musings

THE MINISTRY TEAM AND THE JOURNEY TOWARD PARTNERSHIPS

This month we continue our journey through Advent and we move toward Christmas and the celebration of the birth of Jesus. I want to share with you most of the Ministry Team update that was shared at the recent congregational meeting.

The ministry team on behalf of the congregation are on a journey exploring possible partnerships with like-minded organisations as a response to our vision. By finding supportive ways of working together with other organisations we can further develop our church's own ministry and mission and we can encourage and resource each other. Why do something on your own when you can do it better with someone else?

These possible future partnerships might include:

Glen Waverley Secondary College Chaplaincy Program

Alanee and Lynne Boyer took part in RUOK day – a mental health awareness initiative. Alanee has been invited by the Well Being Dept to present a proposal to resume a breakfast program at the school next year working alongside the Chaplaincy/Well Being Dept. We will need willing helpers to make this successful.

The school lost Government Funding for the chaplaincy position and are inviting churches to contribute. Outreach Missional Group proposed to church council that GWUC contribute \$5000 in 2016 to support the GWSC Chaplaincy program - \$2500 funded through fundraising and \$2500 from the interest in the GWUC Endowment Fund. Church Council have endorsed this initiative and now the congregation has too. We see this as seed or transitional funding as next year we see this being a COP application for funding in 2017.

We plan to partner with **Brentwood Secondary College** in a student mentoring program next year. Meetings have happened and we are now considering options presented by the school.

Glenallen School: We raised \$2437 to upgrade Jai's wheelchair. Nancye and I have met with the principal and I have now met Jai. There are opportunities for our members to volunteer at the school. We can also support the school working bees as they rely on community support for this activity. The principal will speak at the first Outreach Forum in 2016.

Nancye and I had a meeting very recently regarding a proposal for a partnership with **UnitingCare Connections - Chinese Family Services**. Connections are planning to come back to us before Christmas with some proposals about how we can work together next year. This may involve supporting and adding value to our existing playgroups.

UnitingCare Life Assist have had their first afternoon tea at our church for 8 clients who are isolated in the community. The clients and staff met Nancye, Heather and me and we talked about the programs our church offers that might interest them with a view to their clients getting involved in some of our activities.

Recently Alanee and I met with Mark, General Manager Homelessness with **UnitingCare Harrison**. Harrison is the largest provider of support for youth homelessness in the State and they are keen to develop a partnership with our congregation. There are ways that they could support our welfare work. Harrison is tendering for a Youth/Young person housing program in Glen Waverley. It is working in the area of student housing and homelessness. They want to link with this congregation so that they can link any interested young people to our youth/young adult programs for support, a sense of community and where they could explore faith and spirituality in a safe place.

This has been a surprising and interesting journey to be a part of and we look forward to seeing how these opportunities bring forth fruit in 2016.

Neil Peters on behalf of the ministry team

A Journey of Faith

I want to tell you about someone, in our own time, who was imprisoned for his beliefs, was eventually released, was assisted to come to Australia and who was ordained on 19 November at Glen Waverley as a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church of Australia.

Berlin Guerrero was a trainee pastor in his church in the Philippines. He was outspoken about injustices he could see in his country. Regarded as a dangerous agitator, he was arrested and imprisoned, but his faith would not allow him to be silenced. He worked with his fellow prisoners, teaching them and helping them to have some dignity in their lives.

While he was in prison a delegation from the Uniting Church visited the Philippines and met Berlin. This visit led to a campaign of support for him and his eventual release from prison. After he arrived in Melbourne he was supported by the Uniting Church in Victoria.

I have a vivid memory of Berlin addressing the meeting of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania on the day after he arrived in Australia, in 2010. I have since since met him and had several discussions with him at Uniting Church meetings and gatherings. He is a thoughtful and inspiring person.

Because Berlin had not fully completed his training as a pastor in his own church in the Philippines, he had to complete some further studies to be ordained in the Uniting Church here in Australia. He was assisted during that time with accommodation and work as a supply minister. His wife and three children finally arrived in Australia just one year ago. Some of you may have met his wife Melinda while she was doing work experience in our office.

Berlin's ordination was a significant and joyous occasion. He and his family will be moving to Albury/Wodonga in early December where Berlin will take up a placement within the Uniting Church.

In recognition of the support they have received, Berlin and his family gave a gift to everyone who attended his ordination. The items, which came in a small sack, represent his life journey and his faith. I'd like to share the significance of these with you in Berlin's own words:

'Thank you for sharing this Journey and this special day with us!
In the sack are some things I'd like to share with you in [my] Journey:

The Sack

'My roots (where I've come from). My father Samuel Guerrero (Spanish for warrior) and mother, Flora Vehemente (Sp. for ardent and passionate) were peasants in the Ilocano north of the Philippine archipelago.

A small purple heart

'For wounds received in action, Sam was awarded a Purple Heart Medal after World War 2. He later named his house...The Order of the Purple Heart family. Purple Heart symbolised the values of dedicated service to God and people.

A clothes peg

'Flora, as a laundry woman, raised their 7 children in love, exemplifying Christ's humility and self-giving. Berlin was second to the youngest.

Water bottle

'To remind us of the Living Water, and drinking from the infinite Source we will never be thirsty again. The journey is not always pleasant. You are invited to share this water to others in the journey and those along the way.

Cross of Faith

'To remind us of God who became human through Christ. God lives in us, suffers and struggles with us. We are not worthy yet we are redeemed through God's own act of offering the Son as a ransom for our sin.

Journeying

Bell of Freedom and Justice

'Our God is a God of Freedom and Justice. Not only is this revealed in the Bible but is also expressed in the quest of so many people around the world in order for them to experience to be human created in the Divine image.'

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5: 6, 10)

Prayer

Gracious God, we give thanks for those who are not afraid to speak out against injustice and to stand up for their faith in the face of persecution. We rejoice in Berlin's story and pray for your blessing on him and his family as they start a new phase of their life in Albury/Wodonga. Amen

Alison Clarkson

Another Journey Shared

I was not always like this, tied to a walking frame or a wheelchair. In fact those who remember me before my AVM (brain bleed) in August 2014 will recall a person behind the counter at Leisure Time, or offering help with reading at church.

Before that, and retirement, my husband and I had a smallholding in Gippsland, on top of the Strzelecki Ranges, where we ran cattle and tended two acres of garden/orchard. We also taught at a private secondary school in Warragul.

Go further back and you have a period of time in Mount Waverley, attending St John's Church and teaching at Kilvington and Shelford respectively. Or even further, to the 1980s, to South Caulfield and ministry under Bill Morgan at Ormond Uniting Church. At the same time we both taught full time and completely renovated our lovely Lutyens style home nearby.

Then there was a period of time in New Zealand, when we lived in Hamilton and attended the Presbyterian Church in River Road, lead by Rev Ian Purdy. My husband was involved in the Boys Brigade and was an elder, but most of the time I was caring for two little girls and a Japanese girl who was their big sister.

Before New Zealand and the girls, we lived for three years in Malawi, in Africa, just after independence from Britain. Both of us taught again, my husband at the University of Malawi in Blantyre and I at the senior technical campus in next door Limbe. It was certainly a life-forming experience for both of us, especially after we moved from our country house on a former tea plantation to become wardens at the student village in Limbe. Once in town, we made occasional visits to CCAP (the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian) mainly to hear the English preacher there! There are many stories to tell about that time.

My husband was in the very first group of Ph.D students at Monash University, where he studied Physics while the university was built. At the same time I taught English and Careers at Firbank CEGGS, so again it was a busy time. We had married and lived in a brand new Jennings house near Monash. I had been brought up in the Anglican Church and my mother was a devout believer until the end of her 98 years.

I have always had a sense that each stage of my life was preparing me for the next. Although I have made many mistakes as I have gone along, I can see many times when God has guided me, or us, through to new opportunities. Although I am at present bound in by poor speech and poor mobility, I am sure He has not finished with me yet!

Laele Pepper

Getting to Know You

Anne Eelderink

When Anne was born in the Netherlands* in March 1923, World War I had only concluded five years earlier, and the League of Nations, which was established 'to ensure that war never broke out again', was only 5 years old. The Netherlands had maintained its neutrality during World War One and had not been directly involved in the military conflicts. However, they had been badly hit by the cessation of most of their agricultural trade, on which the nation relied heavily.



Anne was born in Boskoop, a 'nursery town' about 50 km south of Amsterdam and 30 km north-east of Rotterdam. She was the youngest of five children with two older brothers and two older sisters. Life in Boskoop was slowly improving after the hardship and deprivation experienced in her country during the war years.

Anna's father owned an import-export business for his nursery, and he was frequently visited by French, English, German and Swiss businessmen who came to Boskoop to negotiate the import of the flowers and shrubs he produced. Anne was particularly close to her father and was often present when the international visitors came, so her father encouraged her to learn by paying attention to their conversation. Consequently, by the age of 14, she was fluent in four languages: Dutch, French, German, English. At school she enjoyed language studies and accountancy, and began to develop her skills in handcrafts. She completed her schooling in Boskoop, but world events again had a drastic effect on the Netherlands.

On September 1, 1939 Germany had invaded Poland, and in response to this aggression France and England had declared war on Germany. Located strategically between Germany and France, the Netherlands was in grave danger. Germany ignored her neutrality and invaded on May 10 1940, a date etched on Anne's memory as it changed her life forever. She was 17 years old when her country was occupied, and she has many stories about life under German occupation: the brutality; the dangers of hiding their male family members so they would not be forcibly enlisted by the Germans; the assistance for the underground Dutch resistance. Anne had close friends in the underground and she often baby-sat their children while they were transferring Jewish people from one place to another. The first two years of occupation were tolerable, but as the German position weakened, the occupation became more severe, particularly for Jewish citizens. Two of her cousins died during this time. For the final two years of the war, the schools were closed, and basic necessities were almost impossible to obtain.

Those years were made much harder for Anne when her beloved father died in 1941. By the end of the war her brothers and sisters were married; Anne was now the only child at home with her widowed mother. Life during the war years - especially during 1944 and 1945 - was very restricted, due to the German surveillance. There were strong links with the Dutch Reformed Church from both her paternal and maternal grandparents and Anne engaged in youth and sporting activities associated with the church. It was through these and other local activities that she met her future husband Henk, another Boskoop resident.

During her early years Anne was given the wonderful gift of learning how to really listen to music, largely from her very musical older brother who played both the organ and the saxophone. Anne

Getting to Know Anne Eelderink

also learned how to play the organ, and one of her sisters played violin, so music was ever present in the household and has continued to be a source of great pleasure for her. Her husband Henk played the piano and their love of music was a shared enjoyment.

After World War Two finished Anne and Henk became engaged, and marriage followed in December 1947. Henk's studies as a civil engineer had been interrupted by the war and during the war years he had worked for the underground resistance. He completed his university studies but was restless for better opportunities and a desire to leave Europe which was so materially damaged by the war and only recovering slowly. A housing shortage - many houses having been obliterated in the bombing - meant that the young married couple spent the first four years of their married life sharing accommodation with Henk's parents. Then Henk met a friend who had been in Australia and was encouraged by him to try his luck there, so in 1951 they bought their passage to Australia with the intention of staying for perhaps 5-8 years before returning to their homeland.

Henk and Anne settled in Adelaide first, and Anne obtained work for two and a half years as a bookkeeper/machinist in the war service homes. Their two daughters, Joanne and Wilma were both born during their time in Adelaide, before a move to Newcastle. After some years in Newcastle, Henk was offered a job as Deputy Manager with the British Phosphate Commission, which was mining on Christmas Island. He accepted the offer, and in 1963 they moved to Victoria and bought their house in Glen Waverley. He enjoyed travelling, and his new job often obliged him to be away at the mining locations, while Anne, with two young daughters, stayed home.

When Anne and Henk arrived in Glen Waverley they attended the Methodist Church, which had just relocated from Waverley Road to the corner of Kingsway and Springvale Road. Anne formed friendships there which still continue. She became involved in the Adult Group, and for seven years she was superintendent of the Sunday School which then catered for about 100 children each week (She recalls that during the time of her childhood in the Netherlands, church was a focal point of Boskoop life with about 1000 people attending each week).

She had adjusted to many of the differences in culture by then. She had been told soon after her arrival in Australia in the 1950s that 'We don't discuss religion and politics', which was a shock to her, and quite different from social gatherings and conversation in Europe. She is pleased that on this score, Australia has changed considerably, as she retains a keen interest in both subjects!

In 1990 she joined the View Club, which works for the Smith Family organisation, assisting disadvantaged families. Her 25 year membership was recently recognised, and she treasures the friends she has made there.

Anne nursed Henk through the long illness which preceded his death in September 2000. She is also the last of her siblings to survive. But age has not curtailed her activity. Since then she has found another vocation, in speaking to various groups about her war time experiences in Europe. She has found that this has provided many ex-servicemen with an opportunity to open up about their own experiences - like the ex-British pilot she met, who had dropped food parcels in March 1945 in the outskirts of Boskoop!

Over the years of her long life, Anne has seen many changes, some precipitated by her move from Europe to Australia, and others just occurring naturally with the passage of time and the progression from one generation to the next. She recognises the inevitability of change, and

Getting to Know Anne Eelderink

acknowledges that life has changed dramatically in Australia since her first arrival here, just as it has changed in the Netherlands.

During those years of change and adjustment Anne has had two constant companions: her love of music and her embroidery. Music still sustains her, and musical expression is a significant part of worship services for her, particularly in the 11am service which she usually attends. She no longer plays the organ but she listens to music a great deal, using the knowledge her brother imparted so long ago. And as she listens, she continues to learn and develop the craft skills - particularly in embroidery - which her mother began teaching her when she was 5 years old. She has continued throughout her life to explore new types of embroidery, to extend her skills and to teach them to others. Examples of her work contribute to our worship services here at GWUC, and she is surrounded by many beautiful examples of her work in her home.



On reflecting on her life, Anne says, 'I've had two lives'. And she is right, for her journey has been one of contrasts. Her departure from Europe to Australia brought a physical relocation to a quite different geographical environment. This also entailed a difference in cultural practices to which she had to adjust. And her life span has also encompassed two quite contrasting historical eras, one of war-time and the other of peace, and this experience has shaped the person she is today.

We thank Anne for sharing so much of her life story with us.

*The official title is *The Kingdom of the Netherlands*, but the nation is often informally referred to as 'Holland', especially in Australia.

Robin Pope

Recognition of Another Journey

A Presentation to Rev Bill Morgan

On October 6th this year the Men's Fellowship made a presentation to Rev Bill Morgan in recognition of his years of service and his valued contribution to the monthly gathering of men of our church. At this meeting Fellowship leader Malcolm Chamberlain presented Bill with a painting on behalf of the Men's Fellowship. The painting was donated by the artist David Williams who has supplied the following background to the artwork of 'The Good Shepherd Window'.

'Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral was dedicated in 1909. The cathedral was built in stages and the nave formed the first half completed. The Good Shepherd Window is found on the north wall of the nave.



Bill, David and Malcolm



David's painting of the Good Shepherd window

The walls were made of brick and faced with local granite. The windows of the nave and porch were made by Auguste Fischer (1861-1916) who was born in Warwickshire, qualified as a stained glass artist and migrated to Australia where he and his work were very popular. He established his business in Melbourne in 1890 and became one of Victoria's leading stained glass artists. He assisted in the decoration of the Menzies Hotel and Collins House. His best church window is considered to be in St. Peter's Anglican Church, Mornington.

The Good Shepherd window is most appropriate for Bill Morgan who has given over seventy years of ministry and pastoral care to many congregations. I think the simple design of the central section of this window clearly illustrates the text: "I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep".



Bill, the recipient, and David, the artist

Colin King

To the End

Every thought, word and action on the way,
becomes the road to the end of life's journey.
To change the end
build a different road.

P G Baker

Getting to Know Your Church

Ping Pong and Badminton Club

Badminton and table tennis are enjoyed by many on Monday and Thursday evenings, from 8pm until 10-ish. All ages and abilities are represented during the evening. Children are welcomed in the school holidays.

Minimal equipment is required. Just wear your non-marking runners (no black-soled shoes) and, if you have a table tennis bat or badminton racquet, bring it along for play. The nightly fee is \$2.

A cross-section of the church community, members of The Hub, and those who locate us on the church website attend. If you seek fun, laughter and physical exercise, then come and join us. Enquiries to Lynne Boyer or the church office on 9560 3580.

Highlights from this year's calendar include the inaugural Ping-Pong-a-Thon on October 30. Approximately 40 people attended the 24-hour event, including an unidentified 100 years young member of the church, and others who were only slightly younger. A pleasing total of almost \$1700 was raised, to assist the partner organisations in preventing child exploitation throughout the Third World. More information on this aspect is available at pingpongathon.com



We thank all participants, and the event organisers who provided tea, coffee and pizza throughout the hours of play.

So be sure to book your place early for the October 2016 Ping-Pong-a-Thon.

Geraldine Fleming

'Getting to Know Your Church' will be a continuing feature of *NewView*. In our recent Advent service, when Alanee listed many of the group activities for which we should give thanks, many of us realised we are unaware of the breadth and detail of the many things occurring at GWUC. If you are involved in a small group at GWUC, please consider telling us all about: why your group was formed, what you do, when you meet, the membership of the group, and anything else of interest. Thanks to Pam McDonald for suggesting this new feature of our newsletter!

An Islamic Nativity

In earlier issues I gave some cross references regarding the relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Further along in the Quran is a chapter titled 'Mary' and it contains references to the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. It is interesting to note that Zechariah's wife Elizabeth is not mentioned but John's conception is very similar to the version given in Luke. The birth of Jesus is completely different from that of Matthew or Luke. The Quran hints at virgin birth in verses 20 and 21, and also in verse 35 in saying "It is not for God to have a son", which is in line with many other Islamic doctrines denying Jesus is a son of God. No mention is made of Joseph, wise men, Herod, shepherds or Bethlehem; it only says Mary withdrew to an eastern location and screened herself away. As indicated in earlier articles the language is unusual to us but this is a direct lift out of the Quran and not my writing. There are 98 verses in the book of Mary but she does not appear to get a mention in the remainder of the book. There are references to the Garden of Eden, Paradise and the Most Merciful. Again I make no judgement or statement on this but thought it may be of interest to us at this time of Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, and to recognise that Islam also recognises Jesus' birth.

Mary

2. A mention of the mercy of your Lord towards His servant Zechariah. 3. When he called on his Lord, a call in seclusion. 4. He said, "My Lord, my bones have become feeble, and my hair is aflame with gray, and never, Lord, have I been disappointed in my prayer to you. 5. "And I fear for my dependents after me, and my wife is barren. So grant me, from Yourself, an heir. 6. To inherit me, and inherit from the House of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, pleasing." 7. "O Zechariah, We give you good news of a son, whose name is John, a name We have never given before." 8. He said, "My Lord, how can I have a son, when my wife is barren, and I have become decrepit with old age?" 9. He said, "It will be so, your Lord says, 'It is easy for me, and I created you before, when you were nothing.' " 10. He said, "My Lord, give me a sign." He said, "Your sign is that you will not speak to the people for three nights straight." 11. And he came out to his people, from the sanctuary, and signaled to them to praise morning and evening. 12. "O John, hold on to the Scripture firmly," and We gave him wisdom in his youth. 13. And tenderness from Us, and innocence. He was devout. 14. And kind to his parents; and he was not a disobedient tyrant. 15. And peace be upon him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the Day he is raised alive. 16. And mention in the Scripture Mary, when she withdrew from her people to an eastern location. 17. She screened herself away from them, and We sent to her Our spirit, and He appeared to her as an immaculate human. 18. She said, "I take refuge from you in the Most Merciful, should you be righteous." 19. He said, "I am only the messenger of your Lord, to give you the gift of a pure son." 20. She said, "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, and I was never unchaste?" 21. He said, "Thus said your Lord, 'It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign for humanity, and a mercy from Us. It is a matter already decided.' " 22. So she carried him, and secluded herself with him in a remote place. 23. The labor-pains came upon her, by the trunk of a palm-tree. She said, "I wish I had died before this, and been completely forgotten." 24. Whereupon he called her from beneath her: "Do not worry; your Lord has placed a stream beneath you. 25. And shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards you, and it will drop ripe dates by you." 26. "So eat, and drink, and be consoled. And if you see any human, say, 'I have vowed a fast to the Most Gracious, so I will not speak to any human today.' " 27. Then she came to her people, carrying him. They said, "O

Jesus' Birth

Mary, you have done something terrible. 28. O sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man, and your mother was not a whore." 29. So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to an infant in the crib?" 30. He said, "I am the servant of God. He has given me the Scripture, and made me a prophet. 31. And has made me blessed wherever I may be; and has enjoined on me prayer and charity, so long as I live. 32. And kind to my mother, and He did not make me a disobedient rebel. 33. So Peace is upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the Day I get resurrected alive." 34. That is Jesus son of Mary - the Word of truth about which they doubt. 35. It is not for God to have a child - glory be to Him. To have anything done, He says to it, "Be," and it becomes. 36. "God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path." 37. But the various factions differed among themselves. So woe to those who disbelieve from the scene of a tremendous Day. 38. Listen to them and watch for them the Day they come to Us. But the wrongdoers today are completely lost. 39. And warn them of the Day of Regret, when the matter will be concluded. Yet they are heedless, and they do not believe. 40. It is We who will inherit the earth and everyone on it, and to Us they will be returned.

Bill Norquay

In Life be Sure

Do you remember
when you were young,
all of your dreams,
your imagination?

Remember your parents
an uncle or aunt,
what did you learn there
or did you just hide?

Next education,
body, mind, spirit –
and life with friends,
was family forgotten?

Then it's middle years
so many adults,
children and others,
are you still learning?

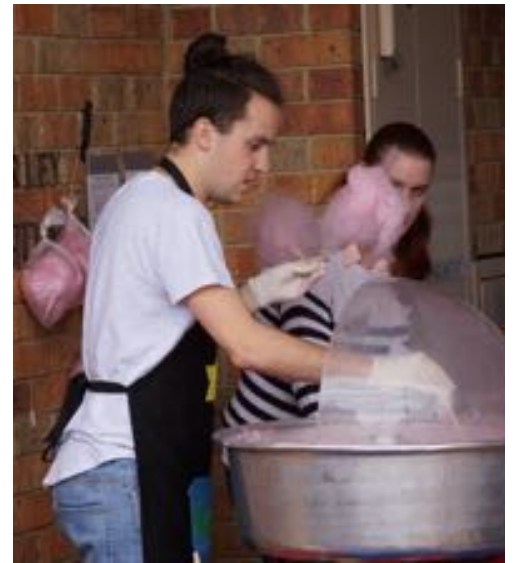
The cycle repeated
and then again,
now caught by age
how far have you gone?

Approaching the end,
are you there yet;
do you know, or
are you still guessing?

In life, be sure
to reach the end
before the end.
It's your choice.

P G Baker

Remembering Our Glen Waverley



Uniting Church Fete 2015



Thank you to Jit Tan for this pictorial record

Julian Burnside OA QC at High St Rd UC

Sunday 1 November 2015 saw Julian Burnside OA QC, an Australian barrister who practises principally in commercial litigation, trade practices and administrative law appearing before a gathering of approximately 300 people who were squeezed into the enlarged High Street Road Uniting Church auditorium with standing room only.

Rev Julie Ross opened proceedings with a recognition of the traditional owners of Wurundjeri Lands and then handed over the meeting to be chaired by the Rev. Graham McAnalley.

Julian Burnside began his presentation with an analysis of human rights within Australia. He recognises that 95% of Australians would acknowledge that human rights are important.

However he then continued with the statement that Australians have known about the mistreatment of asylum seekers for at least 14 years. They have known about the stolen generation for decades. They knew for years that David Hicks was being held for years without charge. He noted that for periods of time there was no public concern about those things. His observation was that the Australian thought process considers that 'human rights are important for my close friends but not for those others - people whom we are not so sure about'. He believes this to be a serious and dangerous way to think.

He noted that conditions within detention centres were getting worse, not better, and yet support for the hard-line policy seems to be getting stronger, not weaker.

He outlined the position of the major Australian political parties, their policies and the legal situation as it currently stands. For the benefit of the audience he extensively detailed the state of Australian detention facilities as he understand them - 'beyond horrifying' - with continual reference to reports that he has received from professionals working in these centres. He also reminded us of the cloak of secrecy applying to the detention centres.

Also clearly outlined were the somewhat difficult visa terms for asylum seekers to be released within the community and the prospect that there may be some political will for minor change to these terms.

A large and extensive variety of questions was then fielded from the audience.

Following Julian Burnside's presentation, Mr Mohammed Isah, Program Manager of the Asylum Seeker Project (Lentara) presented the position of the Uniting Church agency Lentara towards asylum seekers. He spoke of the activities with which it is currently involved, helping to alleviate the condition of many asylum seekers within the community. Many in the the audience were heartened to hear of the wide ranging works being performed by Lentara with many subsequently offering their assistance to Lentara programmes. (The Asylum Seeker Project has been a regular recipient of annual GWUC COP funding over the past years.)

Further information can be obtained from the video completed during Julian's presentation and available from the Outer Eastern Asylum Seeker Support Network.

Andrew Hosking with Heather Wilkins



Campaign Updates from J.I.M

The following extracts come from the November issue of *JustAct*, published by the Justice and International Mission Unit of the Uniting Church

Journalists in Thailand have Charges Dropped

Australian journalist, Alan Morison, and his Thai colleague, Chutima Sidasathian, were acquitted of defamation by the Phuket Provincial Court on 1 September. They had faced up to seven years in prison for defamation for republishing online a paragraph of a Reuters report of Thai naval forces being complicit in human trafficking of Rohingya asylum seekers from Burma...

The court found that the online report was not defamatory, was in the public interest, and that the most serious criminal charges, under Thailand's Computer Crime Act, should never have been laid...

NAB Rules out Funding Adani Coal Mine

In the last *JustAct* we reported that the Commonwealth Bank had ruled out providing financial [support] to Indian multinational corporation Adani, to develop a giant coal mine in Queensland. The export port associated with the coal mine would threaten the Great Barrier Reef.

At the start of September the NAB publicly stated it also had no plans to be involved in funding any part of the project.

Thanks to everyone who wrote to the NAB in response to our letter-writing action.

Stop Uranium Sales to India

The Federal Parliament Standing Committee on Treaties has recommended to the Federal Government it not sell uranium to India until it can be guaranteed the uranium will not be diverted into nuclear weapons, that there is a full separation of the civilian and military nuclear facilities in India, and India establishes an independent nuclear regulatory authority.

The Committee asked the Federal Government to encourage the Indian Government to become a party to the *Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty* (that applies to nuclear weapons). It also asked the Australian Government to facilitate a nuclear weapons limitation treaty between India and Pakistan.

The Committee also asked the Government to reveal what legal advice it had that the sale of uranium to India would not violate Australia's obligations under the South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty.

The JIM Unit made a submission to the Committee and was called before the Committee's hearings.

We had requested you write letters back in February to oppose uranium sales to India, to prevent India increasing its stockpile of nuclear weapons as this in turn fuels a nuclear arms race with Pakistan and makes nuclear war in the region more likely. The Parliamentary Committee clearly shared the concerns raised in your letters.

Thanks to everyone who wrote letters to oppose uranium sales to India.

Pokies Owners Play on People's Vulnerabilities

...Pokies cause considerable harm in our community. For every person who has experienced harm from gambling, the lives of several other people will be impacted such as their children, partners, anyone in their care, employers and work colleagues.

The people who own and run poker machines continue to profit at the expense of vulnerable people in our community. People are also more likely to commit suicide, suffer relationship breakdown, bankruptcy, depression and anxiety, health problems and commit crime (especially fraud).

Many of you have been involved in this campaign over many years. This has resulted in a number of reforms that have already reduced the harm. We now have an opportunity to make further changes...

What you can do

Write polite and respectful letters or e-mails to:

The Hon Jane Garrett

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming & Liquor Regulation

GPO Box 4356

Melbourne, Victoria, 3001

Salutation: Dear Minister

E-mail: jane.garrett@parliament.vic.gov.au

Points to make in your letter:

- Express disappointment that the Victorian Government is not doing enough to stop the harm
- Ask her to commit to the following measures:
- Introduce a bet limit of \$1 per button push...
- Reduce operating hours for the pokie areas...to 10am - midnight...Introduce a duty of care...for staff
- Allow local communities to have the final say on if

Your Chance to Make a Difference

Community Healing more effective than prison

Under the previous Victorian Liberal government, the number of people sent to prison increased dramatically due to policies they put in place. At the same time funding for programs and services which tackle the reasons for offending like homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse and trauma was stifled.

'Many female prisoners are victims of some form of abuse, and over 40 percent are homeless upon release. The children of prisoners are six times more likely to be imprisoned themselves - so it's not just this generation where the impact is hard felt. How do you address recidivism [re-offending] when prison is the place some feel safest? And how can we integrate former prisoners into a society where many have always been marginalised?' (Victorian Ombudsman's Report)

Christians believe each person is made in the image of God and has inherent and equal worth. At the core of our faith we believe in forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a process, sometimes lifelong, particularly for those who have been harmed and who sometimes suffer for the rest of their lives as a result of the crime committed against them. Our Christian belief is that each person is loved by God and worthy of dignity and respect. God desires wholeness for all our lives including the opportunity to put right the wrongs we have done...

The simple reality is 99% of people currently sent to prison will return to the community. We must provide healing for all people impacted by crime, both the person who has committed the crime and the person harmed by the crime. By focusing on rehabilitation and support more people are able to return to being productive and integrated members of the community.

The policies of the previous Victorian Government were designed to punish people and put them in prison, rather than reduce crime by dealing with causal issues like homelessness or providing support for children with learning difficulties. Despite their rhetoric that it would make communities safer, the rate of reoffending by people sent to prison, reach[ed] a high of 44% in 2015. In the words of the Ombudsman the decision of the previous government to reduce access to programs and services has 'unsurprisingly, been accompanied by a rise in reoffending'. Reported crime increased by 20% in the last five years, showing that the path of the previous Coalition Government was a failure by all measures of community well-being and social justice...

Reform needs in Victoria

Given that 35% of people in Victorian prisons were homeless at the time they were imprisoned, the state government needs to address the lack of housing in Victoria. This would help address the causes of crime.

Only 6% of all men sent to prison have completed secondary school, and 14% of women. Further, over half do not have reading, writing or maths skills that allow them to gain a job, even an unskilled one. If the Victorian Government addressed the education needs of people sent to prison, it would mean they are more likely to get a job and not reoffend again.

The Ombudsman found a strong link between substance abuse and committing crimes, with over 75% of men and 83% of women...Despite finding people in prison want to access rehabilitation programs, they are currently unable to due to lack of funding.

Currently there are effective initiatives such as the Drug and Koori Courts, the Neighbourhood Justice Centre and the Criminal Justice Diversion Program which have shown they can reduce crime. However, they have not been given [adequate] resources by the...government.

What you can do

Write polite and respectful letters or e-mails to:

The Hon Daniel Andrews
Premier

Level 1, 1 Treasury Place
East Melbourne, Vic 3002

E-mail: daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au

Salutation: Dear Premier

The Hon Wade Noonan
Minister for Corrections
Level 16, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, Vic 3000

E-mail: wade.noonan@parliament.vic.gov.au

Salutation: Dear Minister

Points to make in your letter:

- Express deep concerns [about] increased numbers of crimes, more people in prison, greater reoffending and resources wasted in keeping people in prison...
- Urge the Vic Government to...adopt an approach to address the causes of crime...[by eliminating] homelessness, supporting those with learning difficulties in schools, and providing decent mental health services
- The Victorian Government should implement the recommendations of the Ombudsman's report '*Investigation into the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners in Victoria*'.

The Hub Seniors' Morning Tea



On October 29, The Hub, supported by Muddings Bakery, The Pastry Lounge, Monash Council PALS, the Body Shop and HUB volunteers held a Seniors' Morning Tea. The proceeds from the morning went towards research into Motor Neurone Disease. \$712.50 was raised. During the event, entertainment was provided by Jacob Davey and Nancy Cottrell.



Thanks to Vida Foo for the photos

Can You Help Sammy?

Sammy Stamp is an organisation which collects used stamps to sell them on to collectors, using the proceeds to provide grants for good works in Australia and around the world. This can be anything from playgroups in Mount Waverley to shower rooms and toilets at a nursing college in the Solomon Islands. While sales of stamps total, to date, approximately \$19,000, grants approved so far this year exceed \$30,000.

Sammy's helpers have been quite busy dealing with, and selling, some quite large collections over the past month or so. In addition, packets and parcels continue to flow in from around Victoria and Tasmania, as well as interstate. Thank you for all your continued support. We couldn't really continue without you as the amount collected from the CBD continues to shrink. Remember to save those stamps on the Christmas cards you receive and drop them off at the GWUC office!

All that's needed are stamps (on envelopes) cut with a border of 3mm (1/4") all round. If you tear the stamp off the envelope's corner please leave a 1 cm margin for trimming all around the stamp.

Dorothy Graham

Book Review

Alan J Roxburgh (2015), *Joining God, Remaking Church, and Changing the World: The New Shape of the Church in Our Time*, Morehouse, New York.

I am indebted to Jit Tan for drawing my attention to this important book which is highly relevant to our congregation's life.

Alan Roxburgh is an Anglican priest who lives in Vancouver, Canada. He is a pastor, teacher, writer and consultant with more than 30 years' experience in church leadership, consulting and ministry education.

The thesis of this book is that traditional church structures are unravelling and congregations are now being invited to take a different journey, a journey into the neighbourhood where God is there ahead of us, waiting for us to join him.

The book is in two parts. In **Part 1**, Alan Roxburgh describes what has happened to mainstream Protestant churches in North America over the past 50 years. After World War 2, these churches were full, but since the 1960s and 1970s, there has been a rapid decline in people attending church. The natural and popular response has been to try to fix the problems and make the church work through strategic plans, new techniques and better programs. But these have not worked. Why? Because God is calling us in another direction. We are being asked to take a new journey.

As the author says:

We are being invited to take a different journey. Rather than asking, 'How do we fix the church and make it work again?', we are being called to ask, 'How do we go on a journey together, discerning what God is up to ahead of us in our neighbourhoods in order to join with God there?'

Roxburgh argues that the malaise of our churches has actually been the work of God, because we are looking inwards, instead of outwards to where God is.

Part II of the book outlines practical ways in which we can find God in our neighbourhoods. Roxburgh offers five key practices:

- **Listening** – to God, one another, our neighbourhoods
- **Discerning** – Where is the Spirit inviting us to join with God in our neighbourhoods?
- **Testing** – Trying out simple actions to engage the neighbourhood.
- **Reflection** – What did we do? What are we learning? Where did we see God at work?
- **Deciding** – Determining the new ways we will now join with God in the neighbourhood.

For each of these, the book gives detailed practical things which each of us can do. For example, when listening to the neighbourhood, we must first get to know the neighbourhood. This can be done simply by taking a walk round the neighbourhood two or three times a week at different times, keeping our eyes and ears open, and reflecting on these questions:

Book Review cont.

What does your neighbourhood look like? (e.g., Buildings, parks, roads, schools, landmarks, shops)
 Who lives in your neighbourhood?
 What is your favourite place in your neighbourhood? Why?
 What is the centre of your neighbourhood?
 Are there different people gathering at these different times?
 Who is on the street?
 What are people doing? Are there things that surprise you?
 What raises your curiosity?
 What created concern or questions?
 Is there anything that catches your attention in a way that you want to ask more questions or get more information?

This book is very relevant to our congregation and what we are trying to do to engage our neighbourhood and to create partnerships in our community. It is written for the 'person in the pew'. It is readable and engaging and makes a lot of sense. It is full of practical ideas and approaches. It would be good if as many people as possible in our congregation could read it. The book is available in electronic form as well as hard copy.

I leave the last word to the author:

We are so busy trying to fix the church we have lost the capacity to discern the disruptive work of the Spirit outside the churches.

It's time to try a different journey. There is no future in working harder to fix the unravelling. We are being invited to put on new clothes, to dress for a journey of hope and life. Our Lord is out ahead of us doing new things, and we are, indeed, amazed.

Ross Mackinnon

Correction and apology

I owe an apology to Joyce and Geoff Fall, for incorrectly announcing in an earlier issue this year that they had just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, when in fact it was their 65th. They will celebrate 66 years on February 11 2016! Congratulations on your long journey together.

Robin Pope

Outreach Lunch Forum

The Chatterbox Bus from Whitelion Open Family

For the last ten years, Faye McDougall has gone out on the Chatterbox Bus every second Saturday night finding and assisting young people in need in the St Kilda - CBD district. Members of the Outreach Committee were enthralled by her (rather reluctant) description of this work, and we were encouraged to invite Anthony Grimm, the Team Leader of the Chatterbox Bus to address our lunch-time forum on September 27. This work has been the recipient of one of our COP grants from fete proceeds.

The Chatterbox Bus is run by Whitelion Open Family, an amalgamation of two earlier groups. Whitelion had been set up for one-on-one mentoring of youth who were in the justice system, in an effort to stop recidivism (ie re-offending), while the Open Family Chatterbox Bus was established by Father Bob McGuire who was also helping young people, particularly those who were homeless.

The aim of the Chatterbox Bus is to assist young people experiencing high complex needs. Anthony is a trained social worker and drug and alcohol counsellor, but it is mostly staffed by volunteers, which is an important facet of their credibility in the eyes of clients who have mostly had poor experiences with 'the system' and are very sceptical about it.

Five nights a week the bus goes out at 7.30pm on 'assertive outreach' - that is, to known locations where they look for young people (and young people look for them), approach them and encourage them to come on board the bus. They contact about 250 people a week over the 5 nights.

The bus carries blankets, clothing, a pantry of food, safe sex supplies, and has coffee, couches, computers and videos available for use. Clients are encouraged to come on board for a coffee and chat, and that is when their concerns and difficulties usually become known. Later in the week, Anthony and a paid outreach worker follow up these concerns with the clients, to help them arrive at a practical resolution.

Common problems clients face involve accommodation (including the lack of it), issues with the justice system, financial difficulties, the need for medical support, and concerns about employment.

Whitelion-Open Family is now a national organisation, and has an Indigenous mentoring program providing crisis management. In order to maintain its independence from government instrumentalities it receives no direct funding, but is reliant on grants (such as our COP grant), individual donations, and corporate support. A recent corporate donation made possible the replacement of their old unreliable bus.

The 26 people who attended the lunch were moved by the stories of those young people on the margins of our affluent society and the commitment of the volunteers and the few paid workers to help their clients re-integrate into society. We expressed our gratitude to Anthony for his time with us and his work.

NB Anthony's talk highlighted the desperate need in Melbourne for affordable, safe housing. See p.16 of this issue of *NewView* for letter-writing action you can take to request our Victorian Government to address this issue urgently.

Robin Pope

Quiet Day for Reflection



On the 7th of December, twenty-eight people gathered at Cornish College for a quiet day to reflect upon our individual spiritual journey. While we had hoped for good weather, the rain did not dampen our day. We gathered at 9.30am and started with a time of fellowship then moved into the day of reflection based upon the monastic rhythm of prayer, study, meditation and work. After a hymn and prayer Julie Hall led the meditation, where we were given the opportunity to either sit quietly, or use some tools to aid reflection through clay, sand, or mindful colouring.

The group then broke into study groups led by John Hurst and Susan Karoly. The text for discussion was Mary's Magnificat, or Mary's Song from Luke 1:39-56.

After lunch the opportunity to 'work' was offered with the view that this work could be used in future worship.



A photographic group (led by David Karoly) walked in the grounds to take images that could be used in a power point presentation to aid meditation (here is a photo of Elwyn Pederson 'moving' with the spirit); one group painted a banner (Mirini Lang, Lynn Peterson, Laura Morgan and Julie Hall), which will be hung in the Sacred Space with the text 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour'; one group discovered the Christmas Story through the style of Bible storying called *Godly Play* led by Susan Karoly; and another group led by John Hurst met to discuss writing prayers.

The day finished with a final time of reflection, prayer and hymn. We all had a wonderful time, and hope that this day for reflection is the start of more such days being prepared for next year. I hope that you will consider joining us next time.

Blessings

Susan Karoly (Coordinator),

Helen Stewart, Mirini Lang, Laura Morgan and Julie Hall

A Reflection on Luke 1: 39-56

Gospel of Luke Background



Mary visits Elizabeth

This Gospel is not an eyewitness account but used the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, a source known as Q and other written and oral sources. Often called 'The Gospel of Women' due to the many women stories such as those about Mary and Elizabeth, some have proposed that the writer had access to a source, or collection of teachings perhaps written by women.

This Gospel appears to be the first written document from a generation that has accepted there is a delay in the *parousia* (the return of the risen Christ), and therefore emphasises that the reign of Christ had already started (17:20-21). The detailed knowledge of the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE, and the split between synagogue and church would indicate that it was written towards the end of the 1st century for Gentiles who live in a predominantly Gentile setting.

The author of the Gospel is not known but is thought to have been a Gentile Christian who was well educated in Greek literature and rhetoric.

Narrative

Mary the mother of Jesus is often considered to be Luke's model of obedient, contemplative discipleship (1:38; 2:29, 51). She is blessed for her belief rather than her biological motherhood.

Elizabeth makes the first and only Christological confession by a woman in this Gospel, with her words, 'Who am I, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?' (1:43), affirming the Christian title for Jesus. This enables Luke to emphasise how previous prophecies have been fulfilled, and future ones will be.

Mary is directly in touch with the heavenly world through the angel Gabriel but is not commissioned to be a prophet but as a model female believer to whom Luke has given a full speech of proclamation, the Magnificat. This is a song of liberation,

- personal
- social
- moral
- economic
- and, a revolutionary document of intense conflict and victory.

A Reflection on Luke 1: 39-56

Mary praises God's liberating actions by evoking the memory of the deliverance of Israel throughout history.

Key themes of the Gospel are introduced here

- good news to the poor
- freedom from systemic injustice by political rulers on their thrones, the arrogant and the rich
- the provision of food for the hungry

God is magnified for effecting changes not only in history but now.

Mary's reversal from lowliness to exaltation (1:46-49)

General statement of God's mercy to those who fear him (1:50)

A recital of God's past and present reversals (1:51-53)

Statement of how that mercy is now being shown to Israel in fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham (1:54-55)

In Symbolism

Mary is the representative or personification of Israel.

The mercy shown her reflects the mercy shown to the people.

The description of God as Lord, Saviour, and Holy will also apply to Jesus.

God reverses human expectations by scattering the arrogant, pulling down the mighty, sending the rich away empty but exalting the lowly, filling the hungry and taking the hand of Israel. This reversal is similar to the Beatitudes and woes of Jesus.

The Magnificat is similar to Hannah's Song (1 Sam 1:11; 2:1-10).

For Mary, God protects her and her child, recognising this child as God's Son and Messiah. It anticipates the resurrection. God has looked upon Mary's humiliation (1:49) and has helped (1:54) her and the child. She represent their hope, as a woman who has suffered and been vindicated.

The Magnificat is not the song of a victim but one that proclaims liberation with tough authority.

Sources

Johnson, Luke Timothy (1991), 'Mary Visits Elizabeth', in Daniel J. Harrington (ed), *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina Series Vol 3, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minnesota, pp. 40-44.

Schaberg, Jane (1998), 'Luke', in Carol A Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (eds), *Womens Bible Commentary*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, pp. 363-373.

Image: Mary visiting Elizabeth: walktheway.files.wordpress.com/2014/05

Susan Karoly

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

Margaret Williams

June Margaret Senior

Marjorie Jean Armitage

We celebrate the marriage of

Wei Zhang and Yu Chan

We record with joy the baptism of

Fleur Bianka Peszynski

Lucy Maree Mathews