

NewView

Our theme of “humility” has attracted a wide range of responses, from those who have thought about its meaning and how it transforms our daily lives (pp. 2, 5), our attitudes to our environment (pp. 3, 4), our sense of self (p. 6) and our engagement with each other. Many of us attended the thanksgiving service for the life of Ross Lennon, whose life was a wonderful example of humility. Until that service I had no knowledge of the significant positions Ross had held professionally, nor of the huge range of skills he had mastered. Nothing in his demeanour ever indicated a sense of superiority; here was a man comfortable with his abilities and happy to use them for others. He was one whose humility was akin to the humility of Brother Lawrence (p. 9)!

Our book review (pp. 7, 8) is an extension of our examination of humility, and brings to the forefront how Australia’s Second Nation people have regarded the First Nation people throughout our joint history. There are unpalatable facts we need to face and acknowledge and these are relevant to our current discussions about acknowledging ‘country’.

We have a wide variety of material pertaining to our life here at Glen Waverley Church. We get to know more about our talented, creative youth leader as she shares some of her life story (pp. 10-12), and we read reports of just a few of the many activities that take place in our church, some new and some with a longer history (pp. 13-17).

We also are invited to direct our gaze beyond our immediate area to those whom we may never meet but with whom we share the daily concerns that face all members of the human family. We learn about how some of our COP funding has been used to improve the lives of women in the Solomon Islands (p. 19).

As we approach our Federal election our attention turns to selecting the next government of our nation. We are conscious of the need for ethical, compassionate leaders with a long term vision for our future that looks beyond short term goals, even when it comes at a political cost. In reading of the cost faced by those who exercise their right to freedom of expression in countries like Myanmar (p. 21) and the Philippines (p. 22) we are aware that democracy is at its best when governments do not intimidate with fear. Just in case we are feeling that Australia is superior to other nations in its freedom from secrecy and unethical behaviour in our political system, we are faced with the prosecution of whistle-blowers in a clear effort to silence them (p. 23). It reminds us not to take our voting privileges lightly!

We have been inspired by the grace of the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Adern, and the way in which she has embraced *all* those who call NZ “home”. May we, and our elected representatives, act with the same humility and wisdom for the good of our nation’s future.

Robin Pope

Neil’s Musings on Humility	2
Humility & the Environment	3
Reading the Gospels as an Aboriginal	4
Humility from My Experience	5
Two Poems on Humility	6
Book Review: Dark Emu Black Seeds	7
Letter from Moderator:	
National Redress Scheme	8
A Strong Single Focus	9
Farewell from Heather Hon	9
Getting to Know You:	
Alanee Hearnshaw	10
Ad: Editor Wanted	12
Delivery of Calico Dolls	13
Book Sale	13
A Journey of Faith:	
Chinese Fellowship	14
Chinese New Year Celebrations	15
Letters to <i>Crosslight</i>	16
Sammy Stamp	17
Gift of a ‘Fall’ for Indonesia	17
Palm Sunday March	18
Poem: Time is Passing	18
Ad: Film: Border Politics	18
Empowering Women in the Solomon Islands	19
The Getaways	20
Human Rights Defender faces Murder Charges	21
Journalists Imprisoned in Myanmar	22
Punishing an Act of Conscience	23
Pastoral Notes	24



Neil's Musings
on
HUMILITY

The theme of “humility” connected very strongly for me. It is an attitude that the Church and the World would benefit from embracing. However, firstly we should think about what we mean by humility. Sometimes people think of humility in a negative way. Examples of this might include thinking poorly of oneself, putting oneself down unnecessarily, and being prepared to be a doormat for others to walk over. The pocket Oxford dictionary on my desk defines humility as “humbleness, meekness”. The same dictionary defines humbleness as “having or showing a low estimate of one’s importance, lowly, modest, of small pretensions”.

However, the definition that resonated for me was from the internet and it stated “**Humility** is an outward expression of an appropriate inner, or self-regard”. That last definition spoke along the lines of how I see humility. I believe humility involves having a right, proper or appropriate view of oneself. It is not putting oneself down unnecessarily and it is not puffing oneself up.

I think humility is an appropriate characteristic of those who seek to follow Jesus. I believe Jesus’ life, ministry and teaching revealed a sense of humility within Jesus. Jesus was recognized by his followers and the crowds as a prophet, a healer, a teacher, as Lord, and as Messiah. Jesus did not claim these titles for his own benefit. He came to serve. He served freely and was open to all people. Jesus was able to cross any boundaries that we might try to put up based on gender, class, wealth, education or ethnicity. Jesus accepted people as people. He maintained a respect for himself and a respect for others. Jesus also pointed beyond himself to God.

So, if we desire to, how do we try to live a humble life as we seek to follow in the footsteps

of Jesus? I sensed a call by God to serve as an ordained minister 30 years ago, and it was confirmed by the processes of the church. As I serve as a minister, and especially so in a congregation like Glen Waverley, I am well aware that there are people in this congregation who have greater skills and gifts than I in different areas. There might be people better equipped to lead meetings, to inspire people, to offer pastoral care, to do the work of administration, to imagine and dream for the future, and to preach as well. The same is true within the ministry team here at Glen Waverley Uniting. Each member of the ministry team brings a particular set of skills and areas of gifting. As we work together as a team, the effectiveness of the team is enriched and enhanced as together we serve the congregation and the local community. Being called doesn’t mean that I am the best at everything. However, I do know that I have been called and set aside by the church to serve the people of God in this congregation and community as an ordained minister.



So how might followers of Jesus exhibit humility? I think it is in our interactions with other people. If we can be genuinely open to others - welcoming, accepting, tolerant, inclusive, showing an interest in people and being non-judgemental - then I think we are exhibiting humility. Quite simply, people are people. While we might have different abilities, backgrounds, opportunities and capacities, we are all equal in the family of humanity. If our world could understand and embrace this it would be a much better place. We can play our part by continuing to love and serve with humility and grace.

Neil Peters

Our Theme:

HUMILITY

Humility and the Environment

By the time the Middle Ages arrived, the focus in Christian theology was on heaven. The most important thing for a Christian was to get to heaven. The world was seen simply as a place which you passed through on the way to heaven and it was regarded as a place full of evil. It was important to move safely through this evil world with one's soul intact. The world's resources were just there to be used at will on the way to heaven.

In recent times, eco-theology (theology of ecology or the environment) has emerged. Eco-theology holds that the world is not evil. It is our home and it is a gift from God to be treasured and cared for. With eco-theology, heaven may be important, but it will look after itself. The important thing for a Christian today is to follow Jesus and live as he lived, loving God, loving our neighbours and loving the environment.

Michael Leunig is one of Australia's best-known cartoonists, artists, thinkers and environmentalists. About thirty years ago, he used to write a prayer each week for the *Sunday Age* newspaper, and these often had an environmental slant and often featured a humble duck. (One of Leunig's duck poems and a real duck featured in the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006, and it was local Mazonod College student, Sean Whitford, who carried the duck under his arm across the MCG.) These prayers proved popular and were subsequently published in a little book entitled *A Common Prayer*. On the cover is one of Leunig's drawings. It depicts a man kneeling before a duck. In the Introduction to the book, Leunig writes:

The act of kneeling in the picture symbolises humility. The upright stance has been abandoned because of the human attitudes and qualities it represents: power, stature, control, rationality, worldliness, pride and ego. The kneeling man knows, as everybody does, that a proud and upright man does not and cannot talk with a duck. So the upright stance is rejected. The man kneels. He comes closer to the duck. He becomes more like the duck. He does these things because it improves his chances of communicating with it.

Leunig is reminding us that connection with the environment is vital for our spiritual peace and our physical survival. We are all coming to know more and more of the importance of looking after the environment. None of us wants polluted air, contaminated soil, dirty waterways and oceans clogged with plastic. Leunig's humble duck has much to teach us about humility and about losing our arrogance regarding the environment. Physicist Paul Davies in his recent books puts the view that the traditional idea that the world is slowly dying is to be questioned. He contends that modern biological research is telling us that the world is continuing to evolve and is continuing to be created. Christians would say that God is the Creator who continues to create. Uniting Church scholar Clive Ayre reminds us that the environment is an integral part of God's Household, not something separate and outside God's Household.

Leunig has a wonderful gift of drawing our attention to simple things in the environment like the duck, trees, stars, autumn leaves, flowers, cats and stray dogs, all of which invite us to be humble. He continues to make us aware of the importance of the environment in our lives and how the environment has much to teach us about humility and our need for it. The following hymn by Michael Leunig, published in *The Age* on Saturday 23 March 2019 continues this theme:

Little flower let us pray
The world gets madder every day
There's little I can understand
The anxious hearts, the broken land

All I want to know is you
Your leaves so green, your petals blue
Your beautiful humility
Are made of love and sanity

Little flower let us pray
Together in this childish way
For there within your petals curled
Lies wisdom that would heal the world.

Ross Mackinnon

Lament and Thanksgiving – A Sequel

Our Theme:
HUMILITY

When Heather Hon and I were planning 10.00am worship for 20 January this year, we took as our theme “Lament and Thanksgiving” – lament for the way in which the Australian Aborigines have been treated since the arrival of non-indigenous immigrants from 1788 onwards, and thanksgiving for the deep spirituality and creativity of Australia’s Aborigines. We had a great deal of material to draw on – more than we could use. The following reflection, written by an Australian Aboriginal Catholic deacon, was one of the resources we did not use, but felt that it needed to be known by our congregation, so we decided to offer it as a contribution to NewView, and here it is. It comes from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council website (<http://www.natsicc.org.au/understanding-faith-and-culture.html>) and has much to teach us about humility.

Reading the Gospels as an Aboriginal by Deacon Boniface Perdjert*

When I read the Gospels, I read them as an Aboriginal. There are many things in the Gospel that make me happy to be an Aboriginal because I think we have a good start. Christ did not get worried about material things.

He was born in the countryside in a cave like many of us have been born. He walked about like us and with nowhere to lay his head. He died with nothing on a cross. So many of our people die with nothing.

He liked the bush as we do. He loved nature. He loved the big things like the hills and open spaces. He loved the little things like the mustard seed and the grain of wheat and the com, drops of cold water and the little sparrows. We have similar 3 things like seeds and berries and yams, small water holes, and we like the quietness of the hills and the bush. Like him we have a deep sense of God in nature.

We like the way he uses the things of nature to teach, and the important part nature plays in the Sacraments. We can appreciate also the community nature of the Church, because we are very conscious of being part of a group bound by religious ties. We are strong on ceremony through dance and song and painted bodies. Our ceremony closely involves groups and group participation. So the ceremony of the Mass, the ceremony of the Sacraments and the ceremony of the liturgy should find a ready response in us, provided it is made meaningful, based on a theology that is tuned to the Aboriginal mind.

*Deacon Perdjert died on 18 March this year, aged 82.

Humility From My Experience

The advertisement read, “The theme for the next issue of *NewView* will be Humility”. Humility is also defined as meekness.

I was hooked, so I went on further and checked the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* which also said, “Humility, a humble condition”. So, of course, I checked “humble” and it read, “showing a low estimate of one’s own importance”. This led me to thinking that in today’s world humility is often thought of as a negative quality. Being a strong leader, standing tall, being a go-getter seem to be far more important than humility.

Humility can be tough to grasp. Sometimes in our humility we deflect kind words; we can sometimes even put ourselves down. But that is not always true humility. Humility is often an unveiling of who we are. Humility is a heart thing. It’s allowing yourself to be loved as you are and extending that grace to others.

Jesus was an amazing example of humility, in His love and care for others, in His sharing of the love and grace of God. Jesus was a person who cherished community and understood, as He encourages us to understand, that we can’t live in true community without humility. I often think that those who are humble are the ones that get down and do it, not for the glory but for the good of all people. That is not saying that a person in leadership cannot be part of the “work force”: we understand that humility in leadership is being part of the team, the encourager, the one who empowers, the motivator, the sort of humility that Jesus, as leader and Lord, demonstrated in His time on earth.

Jesus humbled Himself to come to earth to demonstrate God’s love, grace, forgiveness and inclusion. He could have come as the King of Kings with all the trappings but He came as man born into an ordinary family in an ordinary place. He became a servant and as we approach Easter, we will again remember that Jesus died as a common criminal. Jesus chose to be known; He invited His friends to share in the good times but also in the hard and agonising times. This was raw vulnerability and required humility that could only come from God.

The Beatitudes in Matthew 5, point out that if you want to live for God as a child of “The Way”, you must be ready to say and do things that seem strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse. These beautiful attitudes are not multi choice - that is, you don’t just pick the ones that are easy and forget the rest - they must be taken as a whole. They show us what we should be like as followers of “The Way”. Matthew 5:5 says, “Blessed are the meek (humble) for they will inherit the earth”. Blessed means to experience hope and joy. Just think of it, if we follow the example of Jesus in true humility, we will be able to live in community, peace, harmony and love as we journey through our lives. As we demonstrate those traits to those around us, then they will be reflected back to us as we follow Jesus’ example to create a positive community.



Di Paterson

I like Psalm 149:4 as it sort of sums it up for me, “For the Lord delights in His people; He crowns the humble with victory”. As part of our Christian belief, this is what we see through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

APRIL 2019

THE WATER CURE ...

Sometime when you're
feeling important,
sometime when your ego's in bloom,
sometime when you take it for granted
you're the most capable one in the room;

Sometime when you feel that your going
would leave an unfillable hole,
just follow this simple instruction
and see how it humbles your soul.

Take a bucket and fill it with water.
Plunge your hand in it – up to the wrist.
Pull it out – and the hole that's remaining
is a measure of how you'll be missed.

You can splash all you like as you enter;
you can stir up the water galore,
but stop – and you'll see in a moment
it looks just the same as before.

There's a lesson in this quaint example:
"Just do the best that you can".
Be proud of yourself, but remember...
There is no indispensable man!

Our Theme:

HUMILITY

Each year countless volunteer hours are given to local communities by elected representatives. As councillors and aldermen commence each new year and the tasks ahead, the 'Alderman's Prayer' written by Alderman Doone Kennedy AO, Lord Mayor of Hobart 1986-1996, may provide some food for thought.

THE ALDERMAN'S PRAYER

Lord, Thou knowest that I am growing older.
Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking that I
must say something on every subject and on
every occasion.

Release me from the craving to debate all and
every council issue, although with my vast store
of wisdom it does seem a pity not to use it all.

Make me seem to be thoughtful without
appearing to be asleep at Council meetings.

Lord, Thou knowest that I still need a few
friends in Council.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless
details.

Give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my prejudices and pre-conceived
notions, for my love of debating them grows
stronger as the years go by.

Lord, I do not ask for a better memory but for
a growing humility - teach me that I may
occasionally be mistaken.

Grant me the ability to see some good in other
aldermen, and give me O Lord the grace to tell
them so!

Amen.



Anonymous (contributed by Graeme Frecker)

Contributed by
Graeme Frecker

Book Review:
*Dark Emu
 Black Seeds*
 by
 Bruce Pascoe

Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu Black Seeds: agriculture or accident*, Magabala Books, Broome W.A., 2016.

well by careful management of land and farming of indigenous plants and animals.

Bruce Pascoe seeks to disprove the misconceptions many have about the history of Australia's First Nation People who have occupied this continent for over 60,000 years. He argues against the interpretation that the Aborigines were 'mere' hunters and gatherers. Rather, the farming, housing, and social structures of our first Australians were sophisticated; some practices were ahead of their time.

He interprets the European colonists as believing their destiny was directed by their greater understanding of science, economics and religion. The British, especially, considered their industrial success gave them superiority, with an accompanying duty to spread their concept of civilisation and of God to the heathens. Early European governors, surveyors and explorers discounted Aboriginal achievement. Early settlers assumed entitlement. Aboriginal farming was erased, large tracts of land were grasped for the sheep and wheat considered necessary for the settlers. This attitude was used as 'a political tool to justify dispossession'.

It is interesting that much of Pascoe's evidence against this ignorance comes from our early explorers, who documented their observations as they travelled through the continent. Journals register the surprise at finding evidence of Aboriginal farming of the land, of villages with large houses, of sophisticated fishing methods, and of survival in apparently inhospitable areas. Desert became a term the Europeans used to describe areas where they couldn't grow wheat or sheep. But, in these harsh environments the Aborigines survived

Pascoe records that:

King, on the doomed Burke and Wills expedition, found a store of grain in an Aboriginal house, which he estimated at four tons. (p. 44)

Mitchell said that the cakes made from the cumbungi flour 'were lighter and sweeter than those made from common flour.' (p. 45)

Thomas Mitchell witnessed the massive fish traps on the Darling River at Brewarrina, which some claim are the oldest man-made structures on earth. (p. 53)

Beveridge also remarked on a series of dykes across the Murray River flood plain to prevent it from receding too quickly during summer and thus ensuring retention of fish stocks. (p. 54)

In 1861 George Goyder, an early South Australian surveyor, encountered many large buildings similar to those described earlier by Charles Sturt, very warm and comfortable, the largest capable of holding thirty to forty people. (p. 76)

I was interested in Pascoe's interpretation regarding the work of the early European painters, who till now have been accused of 'romanticising the Englishness of the landscape'. Mitchell wrote of the parklike neatness of areas he observed on his travels. Early Port Phillip surveyor Robert Hoddle acknowledged that deliberation was needed to create these landscapes. Perhaps the painters weren't as 'ham fisted' as thought.

Indeed, Pascoe submits that this park-like

neatness was achieved by good land management, which was used to prevent bush fires. Deliberately the Aborigines chose the most fertile land for farming, the poorer soils for forest. Pascoe goes so far as to suggest that under Aboriginal management Australia was not prone to the horrific bushfires we get today, because the Aborigines, understanding the environment, worked on deliberate controlled burns and land management to keep the fire risk within their control.

Pascoe notes that indigenous culture has a profound obligation to land with no separation between sacred and non sacred actions. All land is held in common, all of life is tied to religious purpose, all members of a community have particular tasks to attend to and must take responsibility for their actions. Our Western lifestyle with its 'drive toward excellence fuelled by the system of private enterprise has an embedded need for exponential population growth - this system seems incapable of protecting key resources such as air quality, fertile soils and clean water' (p. 155). In our modern world this has translated into many in our society not transferring their spiritual beliefs across to commercial practice.

To conclude, Pascoe says that the journey we need to embark on requires conversation about Australia's future with our First Nation people. Our joint history of colonialism and dispossession should be acknowledged, not rationalised away. We must accept and credit the Aboriginal people with their building of houses, their cultivation and irrigation of the land, and that they were not exclusively hunter-gatherers. We should accept that what they learnt over tens of thousands of years is still relevant and valuable today.

To deny Aboriginal agricultural and spiritual achievement is the single greatest impediment to inter-cultural understanding and, perhaps, Australian moral and economic prosperity (p. 156).

The question is – do we have sufficient humility to set out on that investigative journey with all the challenges it would present and the shift in understanding it involves? Anne Cook

A Letter from the Moderator about the National Redress Scheme

Dear friends,

I am delighted to be able to advise that the Uniting Church in Australia has been officially recognised as an active participant in the National Redress Scheme for people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The Federal Minister for Families and Social Services, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, notified the UCA on Friday that the Church has met the requirements to begin participation.

As you are aware, we have been committed to becoming active members of the Scheme since it was announced last year so this is truly welcome news.

I would like to endorse the comments made by National President of the Assembly Dr Deidre Palmer after we were notified of our successful application.

“First and most importantly I want to acknowledge those who have been waiting for this decision, which follows months of work and cooperation with Uniting Church bodies across the country, the Department of Social Services and other State and Federal government agencies” Dr Palmer said.

“I would also like repeat once more the sincere apology I and past Uniting Church Presidents have made to people who were abused in our care as children. I am truly sorry that we didn't protect and care for you in accordance with our Christian values.”

You can find out more about the Scheme and how to access it at the UCA Redress website <http://ucaredress.org.au/> or the federal government's official site www.nationalredress.gov.au. You can also use the freecall line 1800 737 377.

Grace and peace,
 Sharon Hollis, Moderator, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

**Humility,
Understanding
&
Respect**

A Strong Single Focus

Bruce Pascoe's statement in *Dark Emu Black Seeds* that for the Aboriginal People of Australia

"There is no separation between the sacred and non-sacred as all actions are steeped in religious purpose" (p. 127) reminded me of Brother Lawrence's prayer:

*Lord of all pots and pans and things...
Make me a saint by getting meals
And washing up the plates!*

A telling prayer when the man is recorded as having an aversion to kitchen duties. Fifteen years he worked in the position. He understood submission to a humbling task.

In Aboriginal thinking, the people have a profound responsibility towards the land, its plants and its creatures. Individuals have rights and responsibilities towards the land and towards each other. While they do not believe in a God as in our Christian concept, their beliefs and ceremonies are religious and philosophical acts. The obligation of their culture indicates a well-developed understanding of moral behaviour. Deborah Bird-Rose says, "Responsibility is grave: there is no hiding in a conscious universe...the exercise of will in a situation where the choice to deny moral action is to turn one's back on the cosmos and ultimately on one's self" (*Dark Emu*, p. 127). This says that for Aborigines the land and Nature are of paramount importance. This spirituality gives us a clue to their use of the word 'country.' Perhaps, it is time for non-indigenous Australians to stop rolling their eyes over smoking gum branches used for 'welcome to country' ceremonies and at the acknowledgement of elders past and present.

In an age of supposed religious tolerance, the Aborigines have much to offer in understanding the custodianship of the world God has created for us.

The publishers of Brother Lawrence's *The Practice of the Presence of God*, suggest the worth of this book lies in the Christian humility and simplicity of its thought. Brother Lawrence is recorded as saying

The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament.

The Brother's desire was to endeavour always "to walk as in His presence". Surely many Aborigines walk constantly in the presence of their narrative.

One of Brother Lawrence's statements is pertinent to our current need to accept what Aborigines have to offer our culture.

When I fail in my duty, I readily acknowledge it, saying, I am used to do so; I shall never do otherwise if I am left to myself. If I fail not, then I give God thanks, acknowledging that the strength comes from Him.

Second Nation Australians, including politicians and those controlling the commercial sector, need to accept the vital role Aborigines have played in the responsible husbanding of this land, and admit to their invaluable knowledge for the stewardship of this land. But like Brother Lawrence, we should acknowledge the task can only be done in God's strength.

Anne Cook

So Long...

By the time you are reading this I will have been ordained and be about to begin my ministry at Koonung Heights Uniting Church. This is certainly an exciting time and I am looking forward to getting to know a new congregation.

I do, however, want to take this opportunity to say thanks. Not just for the farewell and the lovely gifts which I will cherish, but also for the care, love and support from the Glen Waverley congregation over the past 14 years. As I mentioned, it was Tony who introduced me to Glen Waverley Uniting Church before we were even married and this church has been my faith community since then.

I would like to thank everyone for your conversations, challenges, questions, cuppas, laughter and prayers. It has been an honour and a privilege to work amongst you all.

As I move on my prayer for you is that you will continue to uphold one another in love and have a vision that encompasses all those with whom you come in contact both inside and outside the doors of the church.

Cheers – Heather 😊

Getting to Know You:

My first contact with Alanee's creativity came years ago when the Outreach Committee was discussing ways to raise money for water tanks in the newly-created nation of Timor Leste. Alanee fronted up with an empty 400g can and pointed out how much it looked like a tank! With the slogan 'Tanks for Timor', we were up and away! It was an early indicator to me of the imaginative creativity which marks how she engages with life.

Alanee spent her childhood in Canberra, where she was born and adopted into a family with a brother five years older. The new suburb where she lived is remembered for its transient multicultural population. Alanee's particular friends were Spanish, Vietnamese and Greek, although Alanee did not realise this until she moved away and experienced the more common white middle-class Australia known to so many older Australians.

From an early age Alanee engaged in extra-curricular activities outside school, first helping her father in his business which focused on management of energy in large buildings, and thereby absorbing the ideals of environmental responsible management. However her talents soon led her, at age 16, to another, perhaps unexpected field: fashion. She obtained a job in a fashion boutique, and her competence and creativity clearly impressed the owner, who gave her responsibilities in window design, progressing to buying of stock, and finally in fitting out another store! By the time her secondary education was completed one of her options was to attend a fashion design school in Sydney.

The creativity which impressed her boss in the boutique is also evident in her other extra-curricular activities at her local Uniting Church at Tuggeranong, where she began her work as a youth leader and was active in putting on creative

services to attract young people.

With her schooling completed, she chose to take a gap year before sorting out her future, spending the time working in fashion and continuing her involvement with youth work at her church, and also volunteering at the Woden drop-in youth centre. Unknown to her, someone from her congregation who recognised her passion for working with young people, applied for a scholarship for her to attend Bible College, at ICR Church of Christ satellite Canberra campus. Alanee's first knowledge of this was her receipt of a letter offering her a place there for the next three years! She then had to make the choice between fashion design and youth work, and as we all now know, she chose the latter.



After those three years training she was approached by a Pentecostal Church in Wollongong to become their youth outreach worker, establishing contact with young people who had little security in their home background. It was something of a cultural shock in two ways: she recognised how her own background has been unusually multicultural; and she became very aware of how the jargon embedded in church gatherings is off-putting - and even irrelevant - to those outside a church culture or background. She found some real challenges there too. The pastor had not been quite straight with her in his invitation to work there; she found there was no allocated salary for her work (we would name it as exploitation today), but she was told that 'God wanted her there'. But significantly, the 'call' was to the pastor rather than to Alanee. In addition she felt uncomfortable with the 'prosperity doctrine'

Alanee Hearnshaw

which prevailed there, with its concomitant pressure to dress successfully, coupled with the overt materialism. Nevertheless she stayed there for a year, also volunteering at Lifeline during that time.

It was a disappointing start, but better days were ahead. She heard of a position for a youth worker at St. Simon's, an Anglican Church back in Canberra, so applied and got the job. The three and a half years spent there helped her to determine where her work fitted, and to find out her particular strengths. The cohort she worked with was more middle class, with a core group of about 25-30 young people. They were encouraged to articulate what outcomes they expected from their church contact and involvement. She felt here the beginnings of her mission to speak into people's lives, and their community. They were mostly attending College, so had flexible time schedules which enabled them as a group to become involved in serving their community, such as instituting a bread run, collecting left-over bread from bakeries and distributing it to those in need. She recognised that she loved starting new things, so these were exciting years in her own professional development. She set up events with Christian bands which attracted young people from all over Canberra. She took a group of ten or eleven young people on an exposure trip to the US and Mexico, encouraging them to fund their fares with part-time jobs and money-raising ventures.

During these years she met her husband Joel who, like Alanee, had returned to Canberra after a period away in Goulburn. He started attending St. Simon's and they soon became attached, marrying before Alanee's next move to Bateman's Bay in 2004.

Bateman's Bay was another learning experience. 'I think I was a bit much for them', she reflects, noting that some of her ideas for social outreach were considered too radical - by the parents in particular. It was a relatively traditional Anglican Church, and Alanee felt that

the vision of their decision makers for the future of the young people in the church did not quite coincide with her own. Further, she felt that the focus was more on teaching morality, rather than spirituality. After 18 months she resigned, and moved to running a council-funded youth drop-in centre in Bateman's Bay, where her clientele was 90% Aboriginal, forming yet another dimension to her work experience.

While at Bateman's Bay she was contacted by Dean Mann and was encouraged to apply for the position here at Glen Waverley Uniting Church, but she procrastinated at first, not being keen to re-enter the world of church politics. She arrived in 2006, and was thrown in the deep end fairly rapidly by heading a contingent of about 30 GWUC young folk, plus another 30 or so from metropolitan Melbourne, to the NCYC in Perth.

As we know she has now been here 12 years, and they have not all been easy. She has a core of about 30 young people (plus 'fringe dwellers') again, and her aim has been to equip our young people with the tools to look at their individual faith formation and to establish their own vision of the future by working out the values that arise from that faith. She has a keen awareness of how faith should feed into everyday life, into the workplace, the school, the home. Faith has consequences. The Breakfast Program she instigated with Laura Morgan at Glen Waverley High School is a consequence of a faith that sees social justice as a necessity.

Alanee's first impression of GWUC was of how liturgical it is in its worship services. It was something she had to learn to negotiate herself, and she is acutely aware of how alien liturgy can seem to a younger generation who do not have the familiar ties and nostalgia which connect older worshippers. It is a reminder to older folk like me that it is not the form, but the substance which should be paramount.

**Getting to Know:
Alanee Hearnshaw**

It has been our pleasure, since 2013, to enjoy her monthly contributions to our Sunday morning worship services, although she confesses to having been terrified at first, being in uncharted waters with our formal liturgical procedures in worship.

I asked Alanee how else she fills her life. Ever since their early years of marriage in Canberra she and Joel have had a policy of 'open house' for young people in dire straits. While here in Glen Waverley they have had 8 students from local high schools who have lived with them for periods from 6 months to four years, providing a secure home for them until improved circumstances enable them to move on. This is an extraordinary commitment which is little known and rarely mentioned.



The enthusiastic Matildas supporter

For relaxation, she loves to read, devouring an eclectic mix of historical fiction, philosophy, crime thrillers, and architecture and design. She and Joel love to go hiking when time permits, and attending plays and musicals.

And how does she see the future of our church, and of GWUC in particular? She points out that there has been a decline in staff numbers during her tenure here, but a parallel increase in programs, which she sees as an untenable trend in the long term. In speaking of the work of the church generally, she views the big picture, and feels the church needs to be smarter in supporting and seeing the needs of the faithful, and in sometimes making those tough decisions which have long-term consequences in meeting those needs. As for the younger generation, the church needs to learn how to speak to those not imbued in the traditions of the past, and to allow more freedom in creative expression of their developing faith.

Thank you, Alanee, for your wonderful contributions to our church and community. We are the richer for your ministry, and in our understanding of the needs of young people. We salute you!

Robin Pope

WANTED!

Would you like to try your hand at producing an edition of *NewView*?

Here is your opportunity!

Your regular editor will be away in August-September and is looking for someone to produce our quarterly magazine.

Interested? Contact Robin Pope at popesr@aapt.net.au

Delivery of Calico Dolls to the Royal Children's Hospital

Activities
In & Around
Glen Waverley
Uniting Church

Leisure Time has a long history of making fabric dolls for use with sick children at the Royal Children's Hospital. One of our original Leisure Time volunteers, Bev Cameron, began this work, and has been cutting, sewing and assisting Leisure Time guests to construct and stuff the dolls made from plain calico over many years.

Recently, 74 dolls in four large bags were delivered to the Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville. The members of staff were delighted to receive the and assured us that both the Emergency Dept and Play Therapy areas will make very good use of them. Such dolls are always in demand.

Doctors and other health professionals are able to draw on the dolls to show children what is happening to them, and where their injury or operation site is. It reduces the need for verbal communication skills and is a less threatening way to provide the information they need. The children can then keep the dolls to take home with them.

They thanked Leisure Time sincerely for our efforts to support the work of RCH, and hope that we may be able to make more dolls in the future.



Photo above shows Margaret and David Fraser handing the dolls to Lucia Di Maio, Royal Children's Hospital Foundation, on behalf of Bev Cameron and Leisure Time, January 2019

Margaret Fraser

Book Sale

On March 4 Glen Waverley Uniting Church held a book sale to raise funds for the work of the church. A team of volunteers delivered flyers, collected donations of books in the preceding weeks, and many people brought donations which filled our store rooms until the day before. It was set up in the church, where air conditioning made it more tolerable in the extremely hot weather we were experiencing.

The day before the sale volunteers again came to help set up the many thousands of books in many categories.



On the day of the sale, members of our choir Uniting Voices provided Devonshire Teas for the hungry shoppers.

Altogether, the book sale raised \$4543, which was a marvellous result. Our thanks to all those people who delivered leaflets, donated books, helped set up, sell and clear away the books. Many of those books left over went to other organisations to help their fund-raising efforts.

Our special thanks to Sue Morgan for her organisation, guidance and encouragement.

Photo by Sue Morgan

A Journey of Faith:

Jesus Christ is calling
Calling in the streets,
“Who will join my journey?
I will guide their feet”
Listen, Lord Jesus
Let my fears be few
Walk one step before me
I will follow you (TIS 665).

Activities
In & Around
Glen Waverley
Uniting Church

Chinese Fellowship

The Chinese fellowship was launched on 13th of March 2019, held after the bilingual English class at 3pm and ran for one hour until 4 pm. In the last three weeks, we have had an average attendance of 15 people. It is a good start. Since the majority of them are non-Christians and generally the Chinese do not open themselves easily to religion, other than worshipping their ancestors, it is a great step forward for them to attend the Chinese fellowship. We try to introduce different activities, not only hymns, bible readings and reflections, but also information sessions, music appreciation, games and crafts etc, hoping that they will enjoy our programmes and keep coming.

Rev. Neil Peters is our regular speaker once every month. Other members of the church will also be invited. We have guest speakers from outside the church too. In April, an elderly Chinese gentleman from the senior fellowship of another church has been invited to share his story of trusting in God while fighting against cancer. In May, we have invited a guest speaker from Hong Kong Yanfook Church to give a presentation of her trip to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. In July we will have an information session from Dementia Australia.

Chinese fellowship flyers are on the welcome table in the foyer. Our weekly and monthly programmes are posted on the Faith notice board. Please check it out from time to time. Thank you for all your support and prayers. Glory be to God who guides us through all the way. May the Chinese fellowship be a channel of His love, and to me and Angel and maybe others, a journey of faith too.

To talk about the Chinese fellowship, we first need to go back to our bilingual English class. The bilingual English class has been running for three years. It started with 11 students, now growing into a steady turnout of over 30. You may notice the hustling and bustling in Room 1 every Wednesday afternoon at 1:30 pm. Sometimes the students would come and ask, “Teacher Chan (that’s how they call me in Mandarin), do you have any Chinese service or fellowship in this church?” “Sorry, we don’t”. They looked a bit surprised if not disappointed. A Chinese service or Chinese fellowship??? Yes, this is something that we can think about. The vision of a Chinese group kept coming into my mind for the first half of 2018. Maybe it is time that we need to do something more within the Chinese community.

I began to discuss this with Angel, the other coordinator of the bilingual English class. What a joy in hearing her: “Why? I have the same vision as yours. I can help!” With our bilingual skills, we can do more than teach them English. We can reach out and bring them to God. We can also provide them with care and support for settling well in the community. This “vision” of a Chinese fellowship can be turned into a “mission”, a mission for us to serve the kingdom of God.

When we brought this “vision” to Rev. Neil Peters and the church council, they thought it was a wonderful idea and were highly supportive. We started to explore various ideas for the Chinese fellowship in the second half of 2018. Our first planning meeting was held on 31st of October 2018 with Neil, Glyn, Angel and me. Preparation was then underway and we had another meeting for updates on the 24th of February 2019. We were all set to go!

Chan

Sheila

Chinese New Year Celebrations

On February 17, Glen Waverley celebrated the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Pig. The Kingsway was closed off and many local businesses and organisations set up stalls along Kingsway, with entertainment provided on a central stage. Our church participated in the celebrations, with church members in our stall identifiable by their red outfits and the UC banner. Volunteers provided activities for children in our decorated stall, as seen below.



Pictured left is the Choir which sang at a combined service at 1pm on March 3, when the regular attendees at the morning services were invited to join in worship with the Indonesian Fellowship. It was a welcoming day of praise and thanksgiving, followed by a shared meal.

Have you taken up the invitation to worship with the Indonesian congregation? It is a 'standing invitation' and you would be welcomed!

Photos by Vida Foo

Readers of the letters in *Crosslight* will have noticed letters from the Friday morning group submitted by Bill Norquay. Unfortunately the original text was edited, probably due to space, but an important point was omitted. Following the last letter which was published in the December edition another response was submitted highlighting this point and others. In addition to this, Ross Mackinnon put pen to paper regarding the criticism of the letter. *Crosslight* has not seen fit to publish either of our letters. Whether they agree or not, we are sure some members of the congregation may be interested to read them and we are publishing them below



Beyond Belief ?

We thank Shane Kew for taking the time to read and think about our letters. He acknowledges the right to different opinions and in reality, all our beliefs are opinions based on what we have learned or been told. We come into this world as babes knowing very little except how to breathe, feed and yell with bodily functions. Questioning virgin birth and miracles is not agnostic; however, the traditional church has for many years branded any questioning as heretical in many cases burning at the stake or worse.

Our group consists of Uniting Church members, Roman Catholic and one with Buddhist leanings. To us God is bigger than Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and the rest of the world's religions. We look at the traditional churches today and too many members are aged and we are not appealing to many of the younger generation; we are dying out. Our message is lost to or rejected by the younger generation and we are becoming an anachronism that is past its use by date. The guilt and redemption theology is rejected.

It is good to see the title of Shane's letter. We would recommend Elaine Pagel's book *Beyond Belief*, Bishop John Shelby Spong's book *Unbelievable* and Ian Gutheridge's book *Give me a child* to readers to get an understanding of the difference between religion and spirituality.

Incidentally in our last letter the sentence regarding the flaw in Matthew was omitted; we are quoting it here. "Matthew quotes Isaiah that 'a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son'. If you go back to the original Hebrew text the word Isaiah uses is 'Alma' which means a young woman of marriageable age; the word for Virgin is 'Bethulah' (Parthenos in Greek) and that is not mentioned in the Hebrew text."

Dear Editor

I was puzzled by Shane Kew's letter in the December issue of *Crosslight*, on two counts.

First, he chastises a Uniting Church discussion group for doing what the Church's Basis of Union asks all of us to do - that is, to take note of contemporary theological scholars (paragraph 11). Protestantism began when people listened to contemporary theological scholars such as Hus, Wycliffe, Luther and Calvin, and has always held that this practice should continue.

Second, he appears to pin his faith on the Apostles' Creed. This Creed is an important historical document and, no doubt, was useful for Christians at the time it was written, but it is significantly deficient as a basis of faith. It makes no mention of Jesus' life, ministry and teachings. (One minute, Jesus is born; the next he is standing trial). It ignores the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed, and it does not require the believer to do or be anything. It is silent on our relationship with God and others.

I pin my faith, not on a list of historical doctrines, but on Jesus' clear instruction to the lawyer who sought to test him: "Love God and love your neighbour" (Luke 10: 25-37). Jesus lived by this precept and calls all Christians to do likewise.

If Shane Kew needs a Creed, I suggest he has a look at the United Church of Canada's "A New Creed" (1968, revised 1980, 1995) which begins "We are not alone". It emphasises our relationship with God, other people and creation.

Ross Mackinnon, 1 January 2019

Sammy Stamp News

The Wider
World

Some background to Sammy Stamp:

Sammy Stamp is the nickname of the UCAF Stamp Fund, organised by a group of volunteers who sell used donated stamps in order to raise money to be given out for charitable purposes. The volunteers meet weekly on Thursdays, in the city offices.

Uniting Church congregations throughout Victoria are requested to save stamps, and these, together with donations from other interested supporters and organisations, are sent in to Sammy Stamp and sorted by the volunteers. Most stamps are sold 'on paper' by weight, however the better ones are separated out, taken home by some volunteers, washed 'off paper' and placed in stock books, individually priced for sale to buyers. Most are individual buyers; others are dealers.

New volunteers are urgently needed!

In the March Issue of Uniting Church Adult Fellowship's *Network*, Allan Clark reports:

Sammy Stamp has begun 2019 well. Sales to and including 14/2/19 have reached about \$4,297 (same week last year \$2,130). We are at present about \$6,000 short of reaching the **one million dollars** mark raised in sales since the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia over 41 years ago! If sales continue at a similar rate to last year, this historic milestone should be reached sometime towards the end of March.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this wonderful achievement.

And our local representative Dorothy Graham adds: Please keep up the good work, and drop your carefully cut stamps, or even whole envelopes, in the box marked 'Stamps' in our church office.

A Gift of a 'Fall' for the Riedel Congregation in Tondano, Sulawesi, Indonesia

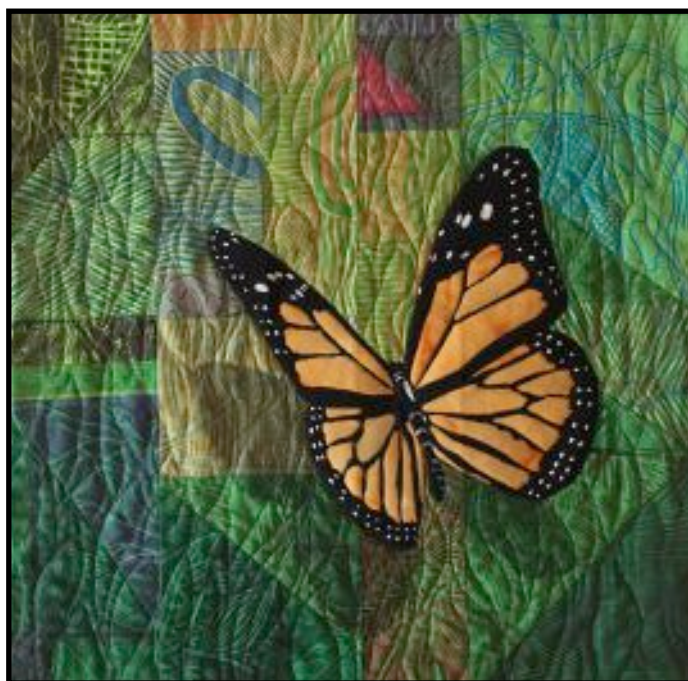
The Butterfly is a symbol of Transformation and New Life, a fitting symbol as we reflect on the effect of Christ on our lives.

I am also told that Sulawesi is an island of Butterflies. I have chosen to depict the Monarch butterfly, probably the most common of butterflies in Australia. "Monarch" is another word for "King", reminding us of Christ the King.

The background is composed of hand printed fabric, made by the indigenous women in Maningrida in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. They have silk screen printed traditional symbols onto cotton fabric, using this new medium in the traditional style of painting on bark. The gold of the butterfly is batik fabric - but sadly probably not fabric printed in Indonesia. It is however used to represent the traditional style of Indonesian fabric printing.

Susan Karoly is also making three green stoles as gifts for when Neil visits the churches.

Sue Morgan





The Wider World

Why it's important to Walk for Justice for Refugees

**Stand up for refugees by joining the Walk for Justice for Refugees on Palm Sunday, April 14
2 pm State Library.**

Help deliver a message to all politicians that we want a fair society. Community support for the #KidsOffNauru campaign has been effective, and the passing of the Medivac bill will help to get many sick people the treatment they need. But it won't get everyone off Manus Island and Nauru.

Seeking protection from persecution is a human right regardless of how people enter a country. Australia is RESPONSIBLE for these people.

The Uniting Church calls on Australia's political leaders to abandon the current cruel and unjust policies, and abide by the UN Refugee Convention to which they are a signatory.

**Glen Waverley Uniting Church
May 5 2019 1pm**

Come to see Julian Burnside's film *Border Politics*, which shows us:

- the situation of refugees in the world today**
- how politicians work to cultivate fear about migration**
- how other countries are dealing with the question of migration**

TIME IS PASSING

The seconds are passing, on and on and on,
A never-ceasing march around the clock face
of time.

What is there to do? We must do more.

Now is the time!

Time waits for no man or woman in its climb.

Wars in Syria and Sudan,

Violence in Rwanda,

Climate change is impinging,

Getting stronger and stronger.

Forces of love need to prepare,

It's not enough to turn on the tv and stare.

What can we do to help our neighbours?

Those seeking asylum,

Those seeking education,

Health services needed to prevent privation.

Buildings needed – we can't turn our backs

Saying "I'm alright Jack!"

Gracious God direct us to do everything we
can,

Surely this must be His plan.

So we can live in harmony, forget about wars,

A "live and let live" philosophy to restore.

Gael O'Brien

The Wider World

The following is a report from Wendy Flahive, from Johnsonville Uniting Church. She was granted \$2677 from our Community Outreach Project funding in 2018 for the Noro Project for Women's Health in the Solomon Islands.

Empowering Women in the Noro Community, Western Province, Solomon Islands, Feb 27 - March 8, 2019

This year's programme focused on empowering women and girls with not only health information but also public speaking skills and confidence building to ensure the sustainability of the programme.

Due to changes to the programme on arrival there was no opportunity to run a Men's Health Information program but RN Jimmy Leni from SolTuna was given lots of resources to enhance the men's outreach work. Similarly, the men missed out on public speaking skills this visit.

The health programme for the women and girls focused on one full day and four half days of reproductive health, family violence and protective behaviour with power point presentations, group work and fun games.

The public speaking programme involved four half days of teaching, lots of practice in groups with the aim of starting a "spokeswoman's club/group" for women and girls. The group plans to meet regularly and keep in touch regarding further support should it be needed.

Those doing the workshop "Ambassador for Women" this year received a certificate of participation rather than competency, as the programme is an introduction, for those new to teaching in their community. The 13 participants received a manual each but there was no time for assessment of their competency by giving a talk to community members this year.

All participants, in both groups, were involved with International Women's Day with the provision of lots of T shirts and resources from East Gippsland in Australia. It was very pleasing to see the newly acquired or honed public speaking skills demonstrated during the speeches at IWD.

Both SolTuna and the wider community have some terrific up-and-coming leaders following these workshops. It was also pleasing to know that the students chose to speak about the recently acquired health information that they were now familiar with during the practice talks on the final day of Public Speaking.



Recommendations

- A program of empowering men to speak up on behalf of women and girls needs to take priority – through a public speaking and advocacy program
- Support for the Ambassadors for Women 2018 and those with workshop participation skills 2019 to lead the education and distribution of Days for Girls reusable sanitary hygiene kits with distribution points in the community being the SDA Church and the United Church in Noro,
- SolTuna have competent nurses to undertake the distribution to employees ongoing. More kits can be purchased when needed from Days for Girls International but the cost will be US\$4 per kit donation plus transport
- SolTuna staff involved in the public speaking group to be allowed time off work to attend meetings. New and aspiring leaders are amongst this group who have been given their voice.

Finally, thanks go to all the donors for providing funding for resources, to SolTuna for hosting the teachers and the community of Noro for supporting the women and girls.

Wendy Flahive

APRIL 2019

When The Getaways Got Away

In the middle weekend of March, the Getaways travelled down to Warragul for the weekend, staying at the Warragul Gardens Holiday Village.

The Wider World



Those who arrived early had already investigated the local eating venues, so Friday night saw a small group walking to a nearby cafe for a shared meal.

We were treated to some wonderful weather which encouraged the fitter members to walk into town on Saturday morning. The regular Farmers' Market was thoroughly explored with some exciting purchases made of food (of course!), plants and garments (which you may see in the coming months).

Quite a large contingent came down from Glen Waverley for a day visit, and many of these joined us at the market before we retired to our caravan park to sit in a companionable group in and around the Boldiston's camper van, where we yarned, ate lunch, drank coffee and swapped stories all afternoon.

A regular feature of these weekends has been the shared dinner on Saturday night. We were fortunate to have the sole use of a community room with kitchen facilities for this occasion. Our wonderful organiser Jo Boldiston brought in food purchased from our shared "kitty". We were treated to helpings of barbecued chicken and a vast array of salads, followed by an ice cream for dessert and then tea and coffee to wash it all down.



A traditional feature of these evenings has been the quiz - also devised by our intrepid leader Jo - which follows the meal. She assured us that this year's effort was "much easier than last year's", but we begged to differ, and suspect she took some pleasure in concocting such questions as "What is the collective noun for a group of eels?" Even our clear winner, Alison Barr, barely managed a 50% success rate!

We had a discussion about the future of these weekends, given the shrinking numbers and the busy-ness of people's lives, but it was agreed we wanted a get-together of some kind in November.



Robin Pope

From the February issue of Just Act, the news from the Justice and International Mission Cluster

The Wider World

What Can You Do?

Write polite and respectful letters to:

Christian Human Rights Defender faces trumped-up murder charges in the Philippines

Filipino health care worker and human rights defender Rachel Mariano is facing trumped-up murder and attempted-murder charges in her homeland in a deliberate bid to silence her.

Rachel is an indigenous Ibaloi and has worked tirelessly as an advocate in asserting the rights of Indigenous peoples in Icos to self-determination, ancestral lands and community-based health care systems.

She is also a member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, which has a formal partnership with the Uniting Church in Australia.

Members of the 81st Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army based in Ilocos Sur filed a case of one count of murder, two counts of frustrated murder, and six counts of attempted murder against Rachel, in an alleged shoot out between the Philippine Army and the armed communist group, New People's Army (NPA), in Patican, Quirino, Ilocos Sur on 15 October 2017 where a soldier was killed.

Under Filipino law frustrated murder is when the victim was wounded in the attempted murder, but due to medical intervention their life was saved.

Two more trumped-up charges were filed against her together with four other women human rights defenders (Sarah Abellon, Sherry Mae Soledad, Joanne Villanueva and Asia Gepte). One case covers four counts of attempted and frustrated homicide related to an alleged armed clash between the Philippines army and the NPA in Sigay, Ilocos Sur on 4 August 2017 and the other case with 10 counts of attempted homicide related to another army and NPA shoot out that occurred in Salcedo, Ilocos Sur on 22 July 2017.

The Filipino army and police have a long history of placing false charges against human rights defenders in a bid to harass and intimidate them. The Uniting Church has campaigned on many such cases.

Rachel is being detained in a provincial jail in Ilocos Sur awaiting trial. She is married to Bill, who is a pastor in the UCCP, and they have three children.

Senator The Hon. Marise Payne

Minister for Foreign Affairs,
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600. Salutation: Dear Minister

- Express deep concern at the imprisonment of health worker Rachel Mariano in the Philippines on trumped-up charges of murder, frustrated murder and attempted murder.
- Express concern that these charges are being brought against her and four other human rights defenders Sarah Abellon, Sherry Mae Soledad, Joanne Villanueva and Asia Gepte, as a means to harass and intimidate them over their peaceful human rights work
- Ask that the Australian Government seek the immediate and unconditional release of Rachel Mariano.
- Request that the Australian Government ask the Philippines Government to drop the charges against her and the other four women.

Also write to:

Mr Jim Tito B. SAN Agustin
Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of the Philippines
1 Moonah Place
Yarralumla, ACT 2600.

Salutation: Dear Mr San Agustin

- Express deep concern at the imprisonment of health worker Rachel Mariano in the Philippines on charges of murder, frustrated murder and attempted murder.
- Express concern that these charges are being brought against her and four other human rights defenders (name them) as a means to harass and intimidate them over their peaceful human rights work.
- Ask for the immediate and unconditional release of Rachel Mariano.
- Ask the Philippines Government to drop the charges against her and the other four women human rights defenders

APRIL 2019

From the February issue of Just Act, the news from the Justice and International Mission Cluster

The Wider World

Journalists Imprisoned in Myanmar for exposing Rohingya Massacre

Two Reuters journalists have been imprisoned for seven years in Myanmar for reporting on the massacre of the members of the Rohingya ethnic group.

The journalists, Wa Lone (aged 32) and Kwaw Soe Oo (aged 28) were investigating the massacre of 10 Rohingya in Inn Dinn village in Rakhine State by members of the military and some local people. They uncovered photos of the 10 victims tied up and kneeling before they were murdered. On April 10 2018, the military announced that seven soldiers had been sentenced to 10 years in prison and were dismissed from the army for their part in the massacre.

The journalists were charged under the *Official Secrets Act* and were held in prison for nine months before being sentenced on 3 September 2018.

Reuters has said that the two were innocent and were simply doing their job by reporting on a massacre of Rohingya, and urged the court to dismiss the case.

The journalists have appealed their sentence, with the first hearing of the appeal having taken place on 24 December 2018. The appeal case is on-going. On 10 December 2018, *Time Magazine* named the two journalists among four people, as their Persons of the Year for 2018.

A police captain, Moe Yan Naing, testified at their trial that the police were ordered to set up the journalists by planting "secret papers" on them. He was subsequently sentenced to a year in prison in a secret trial after revealing the journalists had been set up. Non-government organisation PEN Myanmar gave Moe Yan Naing the "Outstanding Protector of Freedom of Expression" award on 22 December 2018 in recognition of his staunch evidence of the truth despite the consequences...

Wa Lone's wife...gave birth on 10 August to a girl... She is the couple's first child...

Kwaw Soe Oo has also been parted with his daughter, 3 year-old Moe Thin Wai Zan.

The Australian Ambassador to Myanmar, Nicholas Coppel, told the media "Australia has watched this case very closely. Embassy staff attended all the hearings and heard the evidence, including conflicting evidence by prosecution witnesses. We were therefore disappointed to hear that the journalists were found guilty.

Wa Lone's first job in journalism was with the *People's Age* journal. In 2014 he joined the English-language *Myanmar Times*, covering the 2015 election that swept Nobel peace prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to power. Wa Lone wrote a children's book and co-founded a charity that promotes tolerance between different ethnic groups and helps orphans. Wa Lone joined Reuters in 2016. His work on the crisis that erupted in Rakhine State in October 2016 won him a joint honorable mention from the Society of Publishers in Asia in its annual awards.

Kyaw Soe Oo is an ethnic Rakhine Buddhist who grew up in the state capital, Sittwe. He started his reporting career with the online *Rakhine Development News* and later worked at the Root Investigative Agency. He has been with Reuters since September 2017.

Are you concerned?

What you can do:

Some letters have been drafted to help you to respond to this issue. They are outside the church office window.

You can pick up copies of the letters addressed to the President, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Ambassador for Myanmar. Sign them, and post them to the address at the top of the letter. It will cost you \$2.30 postage to send to Myanmar.

There is also a letter to the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs thanking her for speaking publicly against the imprisonment of the journalists and asking that she continue her advocacy for their release.

From the February issue of Just Act, the news from the Justice and International Mission Cluster

The Wider World

Punishing an Act of Conscience The Prosecution of Witness K

The Australian Government gained an unfair advantage in negotiations over the division of oil and natural gas deposits in the Timor Sea by bugging the cabinet offices of the Timor Leste Government in 2004 using Australia spies posing as aid funded contractors. This would have resulted in the people of Timor-Leste being cheated out of vital revenue they needed for health clinics and schools.

The operation was exposed in 2012 by the head of the technical unit of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) responsible for planting the bugs. He was known as Witness K.

His action ultimately contributed to a fairer settlement over the resources in the Timor Sea. The Australian Government is now in the process of ratifying the treaty that will establish the maritime border between the two countries.

However, the current Coalition Government is now seeking to punish Witness K and his lawyer, Bernard Collaery for exposing their unethical behaviour, by prosecuting them for revealing the planting of the listening devices. Witness K acted out of good conscience in revealing that the Australian Government had placed listening device in the offices of the Timor-Leste Government.

Mr Collaery also acted for the Timor Leste Government in the International Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague that was responsible for co-ordinating the conciliation process...over the maritime boundary between the two countries.

"I was privileged to have sought justice for the poorest country in Asia, for a people with a high infant mortality rate", he says.

This prosecution is sending a signal that any person working for Australia's intelligence agencies who, out of conscience, reveals unethical and unconscionable behaviour by an Australian Government is likely to face prosecution years later.

We doubt the Australian Government would take the view that it would be acceptable for the agents of foreign government to plant listening devices in the offices of Australian Government Ministers to gain an advantage in treaty negotiations.

The Australian Government should acknowledge that it acted unethically and in bad faith when it planted the listening devices...As a sign of that acknowledgement it should end the prosecution of Witness K and Mr Collaery.

The Attorney General has the power to stop the prosecution under section 71 of the *Judiciary Act*.

The court hearing the case against Witness K and Mr Collaery decided the Attorney General has the power to rule if the trial will be held in secret. It is possible that Witness K, Mr Collaery and their lawyers may be excluded from the parts of the trial involving matters that the Attorney General asserts are matters of "national security".

This is likely to undermine Witness K and Mr Collaery obtaining a fair trial. The government is using the 2004 *National Security Information Act* to keep parts of the trial secret, a law that was intended to be used to protect classified information in terrorism trials.

Our Christian faith leads us to do what we understand to be right and ethical, even if that will have negative consequences for ourselves. This is exactly what Witness K and Mr Collaery have done and we should not stand by and let the current Coalition Government put them in prison for having done so.

The Uniting Church in Australia has been an advocate for and friend of the people of Timor - Leste for a long time and wants Timor-Leste to have the resources that it needs to be self-sufficient. We are a partner church of the Protestant Church of East Timor (ITPL)...

Are you concerned?

What you can do:

Some letters have been drafted to help you to respond to this issue. They are outside the church office window.

You can pick up copies of the letters addressed to the Attorney General and the Prime Minister, sign them and post them to the address at the head of the letter.

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

Kenneth McPherson GRANTER

Ross Mathew LENNON

Clarence Wright PATERSON