

NewView

This issue comes to you in vastly different circumstances than usual. Each of our lives has been reconstructed in ways which affect each of us differently and we need to support each other as imaginatively as possible. Our video broadcast services are one way we can hold on to older, significant routines, as are on-line conferences, phone calls and other social media. We can give thanks that this virus has come at a time when we can stay in touch through so many different means, and remember that our isolation is nothing compared to those in poorer countries without such access.

We read in this issue of various activities which occurred at GWUC pre-coronavirus, as well as our regular introduction to the lives of two of our community members (pp 4-5). However the bulk of the issue is concerned with either our theme of loyalty, or the effects of the pandemic. There are various reflections on our current situation, including opportunity for making meditative spaces in our lives (pp 13, 20).

Both Neil and Di reflect on how loyalty has characterised much of their lives and given it structure. Neil cautions, though, against 'blind loyalty'. This can be given uncritically to a person, an ideal, a belief, or an organisation without regular review. In this time of enforced isolation we can make constructive use of our freedom from the busyness of our usual lives to reflect on and review where our current loyalties lie. How do our daily lives and commitments reflect the values we espouse? Is there a mismatch between what we think and how we actually live and spend our time and energy?

Neil prayed that we would have strength to support a world in which we would ensure that no one would be left on the margins. If you read the article from the JIM Cluster (p.17) you will see that even in Australia many thousands have been left vulnerable and without support. There are even more dire situations in refugee camps and in crowded places like Gaza that leave millions of people fearfully exposed to the virus. For those of us who, like me, have received but not needed the cash given out by the government, here is a chance to use it in helping others, thus connecting our professed beliefs with our actions. Perhaps this can also be the moment when we all find the time to do those things that we always put off. If we have been 'partial justice warriors' (Neil's words in prayer today) let us use this 'time out' for activities such as writing that letter to our politicians, taking practical steps to help others, striving to include those who are excluded, bridging the gaps that have separated us from others.

May you be blessed in your journey of self-discovery.

Robin Pope

Our Theme: Loyalty

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Neil's Musings | 2 |
| Di on Loyalty | 3 |

Getting to Know You:

| | |
|---|----|
| Geraldine and Robert Fleming | 4 |
| A Response : Bill Norquay | 7 |
| Sammy Stamp | 7 |
| Mount View Hub | 8 |
| Sunshine at GWUC | 10 |
| Book Sale | 11 |
| The Chartres Labyrinth: A Meditation | 12 |
| It's All a Matter of Choice | 14 |
| The Cross in My Pocket | 14 |
| Corona Days Diary | 15 |
| Isolation | 16 |
| Light | 16 |
| Supporting Vulnerable People | 17 |
| What Can I do Now? | 19 |
| Two Prayers | 20 |
| Help for <i>NewView</i> | 20 |

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Loyalty is not a word I use very often. But I actually think Lynn and I would be seen as loyal customers to several businesses. We have been customers of the same bank for 30 years. We always shop at the same supermarket unless we are on holidays. For us it is being comfortable with what we know and understand. You know where things are in your regular supermarket. We would be seen as loyal customers. I also go to the same coffee shops because, firstly I like the coffee, and then also the staff and the environment.

I could also be considered loyal to the church and my denomination in particular. I have attended church weekly for all my 61 years. The first 18 years of my life were in the Methodist Church and then in the Uniting Church. In my twenties I had friends who tried to get me to go to their local church (different denomination) but I always stayed Uniting.

It could be said that I am loyal to the Uniting Church. However, I don't think of it in terms of loyalty. I express it as 'I am a committed follower of Jesus Christ first and foremost'. The Uniting Church has become my home, my family, a family that has nurtured me and sustained me and allowed me to grow in faith and understanding and has encouraged me to use my gifts in serving others. It is also what the Uniting Church stands for that resonates so strongly with me. It stands for important values like inclusion, welcome, diversity in all its expressions, social justice, allowing questions and encouraging each of us to think, actively supporting those who struggle in our community, and the equal place of men and women. This is a church that I want to belong to and give expression to my faith within.

As the theme was "loyalty" I checked my computer definition of loyalty. The internet said loyalty means "faithfulness to a commitment or an obligation". Then in terms of a relationship, loyalty involves "love, devotion, dedication and commitment". So, while I don't often use the word loyal, I know that I think and speak in terms of faithfulness, dedication and commitment. And I am devoted to my wife of 30 years. So, I express loyalty even if I don't think of the word often.

However, I want to caution against what might be called blind loyalty. I won't always agree with everything the Uniting Church does. The so called "divestment process" was one instance. It is healthy to think, and discuss and raise a different point of view in respectful and helpful ways. And sometimes that leads to a better outcome. Also, loyalty in our personal relationships no matter what the situation is not something I can support. Staying in violent or abusive relationships out of loyalty when one's safety is at risk is not a good choice. Yes, seek professional help; but simply staying for the sake of loyalty is another matter in my view.

Lastly, I can only look to God to see the complete and full expression of faithfulness, of loyalty if you like, to loving fully human beings and the whole of creation.

Please remember, at this time you may be isolated but you are not alone. The church through the ministry team is only a phone call, text, email message away. We are happy to chat and arrange assistance where we can. Also, phone some friends from church as some have been doing. Let's support each other through this challenging time for our community and the world.

Neil

Our Theme:

LOYALTY

LOYALTY

As many of you know, I have been a Girl Guide for most of my life. I have often commented that I don't know how my life would have been without Guiding - the principles, the knowledge gained and of course, the friendships. When I became a Guide, I made a promise, as do all Guides. I promised to do my best, to do my duty to God and the Queen, to help other people at all times and to keep the Guide Law. When I became a Guide there were 10 Guide Laws. I won't go through all of them, but I will tell you the first one: A Guide is Loyal and can be Trusted. I would like to think that loyalty and trustworthiness have been a strong part of my life. I guess I feel that these two go hand in hand, being loyal to things and people and to be a person who can be trusted.

For me, initially, being loyal meant going to Guides every week, going on the hikes and camps that our unit were involved in and, as a Patrol Leader, to assist the people in my patrol to achieve their goals as Guides. Also, as a Patrol Leader, I had to be trusted not to talk about anything discussed at the Leaders' meeting.

I think loyalty is *stickability*; that is, sticking to the commitments you make in activities and in life. I believe that I have been a loyal Guide and I hope, a loyal friend, loyal to my family and loyal to my faith. As we move further into isolation, due to the Corona Virus, it can become challenging to remain loyal to things we can't do or go to. To be loyal to the many groups that we are involved with can be difficult when we can't meet together. One of the big challenges for many of us, is how to remain loyal to our Church and our God when we are isolated from the things that help us to revitalise and feed our faith. The joy of joining in community to worship God, to sing songs of praise, to pray and to share in Holy Communion are very important to us as a family of God.

One of the joys for all of us though, is modern technology. We can live stream a Church service; we can meet through ZOOM; we can chat on the phone; talk on Facetime or Skype. But one of the things we really miss is human contact and the cuppa together after Church. So let me encourage you, each week after you have watched the live stream service, to make a cuppa and phone a friend from Church and share over a cuppa.

Loyalty is so important at this time. Hanging in there is essential, so that we can come out of the other end of COVID-19 as a strong, loyal and trustworthy Church. Yes, it is hard to be isolated but we can be positive in this negative time.

One of my other Guide Laws is: a Guide smiles and sings under all difficulties. This one has been a challenge at the Guide camps where it pelted rain; on hikes when it rained for days and all your gear was wet; the times when the map didn't take us where we thought we should be; and of course, the time we were forced to sleep on the side of the track with little shelter or food, when one girl got injured at camp and her parents said, "That's the last camp you ever go on!"

Smiling and singing is one of the things we do when we worship. Smiling and singing is one of the great things we can do in isolation. Spending time in the sunshine of God's love, spending time in reading God's word and spending time in prayer can hold us together as the people of God. This virus might cause us to lose a lot, but it can give us the chance to gain a lot. It can give us the chance to trust God and to strengthen our loyalty to God and the Church. If a Guide can be loyal and trusted, I believe that we, as the people of God, can be loyal to God and the Church and steadfastly keep the faith.

Di Paterson

Getting to Know You:

Getting to Know You:

Geraldine and Robert Fleming

'Globalisation' is an everyday term we use in these days of pandemics, digital communication and frequent international travel; but long before it became a common part of our vocabulary, two people in our congregation were already global citizens.



Geraldine and Robert Fleming



Geraldine about 2 years old

Geraldine and Robert Fleming were both welcomed into this world in Northern Ireland. Geraldine opened her eyes in Londonderry, the name itself being a source of conflict during the thirty-year Troubles in the last decades of the twentieth century. But Geraldine, born in 1940 more than twenty years before the Troubles exploded, knew it as 'Derry', when it had a population of about 50,000. She was the eldest of her parents' three off-spring, later being joined by two younger brothers. Her childhood was spent in suburban Derry, with mother at home and her father a travelling salesman.

Perhaps because she was a girl and her parents were protective, she began her education at the prep school of Londonderry High School, a private school, while her brothers attended the public elementary school - which Geraldine feels gave them a better educational foundation! As is customary in the United Kingdom, Geraldine moved away from home for her tertiary education at Stranmillis College in Belfast, where she shared accommodation with other young students in 'digs'. On graduation she boarded with an aunt in Belfast, taking up a teaching appointment in a fairly tough area with classes of about 40 children, and schools segregated into Protestant/Catholic. Her teaching duties included Religious Studies, which entailed particular Bible stories, singing a hymn and reciting a Bible verse from memory. Socially, she found relief from the rigours of teaching by going out with friends on Saturday nights to a local dance hall. It was at one of these occasions she met Robert in 1962.

Robert had been born, the elder of the two children in his family, in Strabane, a town some 15 miles south-west of Derry. He attended the local primary school, and began piano lessons at the age of 10 years. Secondary schooling followed at Foyle College in Derry at age 12. He was offered a boarding scholarship there, which he took up, but found he hated boarding and the obligatory participation in rugby, although he enjoyed playing cricket. During these teenage years his mother



Robert 1950

Robert and Geraldine Fleming

APRIL 2020

passed away as a result of a severe asthma attack. Robert was relieved when the boarding section closed down after three years and he was obliged to go into digs. He eventually completed his secondary schooling by commuting by bus from Strabane. His academic strengths initially lay with the classics - in Greek and Latin - but in Year 5 he took up physics and chemistry with the intention of doing medicine at university. Having completed his A Levels in Greek and mathematics, he was eager to enter university, but found he needed to do another year to enter medicine at Queens University in Belfast, so he switched to science because he was able to commence immediately.

Geraldine and Robert were soon 'an item', and he carefully chose an umbrella for his first birthday gift to her. By 1963 they were engaged, and in June 1964 they were married in the Presbyterian Church which Geraldine attended in Derry. They remember the forthright minister of this church who declared publicly, 'If you have alcohol at your wedding, I don't want to be invited'. The church still stands, but the nearby hotel where their reception was held was bombed in the Troubles which began a few years later. Robert had attained his Ph. D in 1962, and had also begun organ lessons as an extension to his keyboard skills on the piano.

In 1964 they left Ireland for Derby, England, where Robert had a job with Rolls Royce & Associates. But he found his work made insufficient use of his expertise so he resigned after three months and they moved to Swindon, where Geraldine obtained a teaching position. She loved her job there and was clearly good at it for the principal soon offered her a promotion to a position of responsibility, despite being advised against making such an offer 'because she'll only get pregnant'. The forecast proved to be correct, and the principal was told, 'Serve you right!'. However she was far ahead of her time, for when Richard was born in 1966, Geraldine was able to take him to school so she could resume her teaching responsibilities, and the principal organised various aides within the school to care for the baby. Subsequently a neighbour was hired for this purpose, but a comparison with the Australian situation (where until 1966, marriage had meant the termination of paid work for married women) demonstrates the far-sightedness Geraldine encountered.

During this time, Robert was employed teaching officers at the Royal Military College of Science. One day he saw an advertisement in a science journal for a research/teaching position at the new university (Monash) in Melbourne, Australia, so he submitted a written application and mailed it off. In December 1966 he received notification that he had been the successful applicant - without interview - and was to take up the new position on a three-year contract. Geraldine returned to Derry for a short visit, leaving Robert to organise the sale of their house and the packing of its contents. By late July they departed for Melbourne, secure in the knowledge that Robert was being paid from the date they set sail.

Within four weeks of arrival they had purchased a house in Leewarra Drive in Glen Waverley, and on unpacking their household goods Geraldine found that the professional packers they had employed had stripped their previous home and had shipped the carpets, the curtains and even the light globes, so they wanted for nothing in establishing their new home! The following year Robert and Geraldine welcomed Michael into their family. Both boys attended the Monash Kindergarten and then Highvale Primary School. Geraldine had remained in touch with the classroom by doing volunteer work at Highvale and then returned to teaching when Richard began primary school. Geraldine speaks with affection and gratitude of the lady who cared for Richard and Michael after school and provided house help for some 13 years.



In 1974, the family returned to England, where Robert spent a year's study leave at Nottingham University. Back at Monash he continued his research and was awarded a D. Sc. in 1985 by his alma mater, The Queen's University of Belfast. Another year's study leave in 1989 enabled him to work in Japan, although on this occasion Geraldine remained in Melbourne and joined him for a month or two only, when they were able to climb Fuji-san together. The initial three year contract he had undertaken in 1967 ended with his retirement in 2000, by which time he held the position of Reader.

He kept his research laboratory going for eight years after his official retirement, and then spent a further ten years as editor of a technical magazine published in the US, so it is only in the last couple of years he has been without professional commitments. He had, during his working life, been involved with the C.M.F. (Citizen Military Force, later called the Army Reserve), although he retired from that in 1989. He had begun making use of his organ-playing skills soon after arrival in Australia, by playing at Oakleigh Presbyterian Church. He has been playing at Glen Waverley Presbyterian Church/Glen Waverley Uniting Church since the late 1970s. In 1984 they had moved to Glenview Court, where they happily remain, but now he also hopes to have enough time to keep up with the maintenance of their home.

Geraldine also retired in 2000, although for some time she continued doing volunteer work in schools and some tutoring in English and maths. Since then they have travelled to places not previously visited in their global travels. A trip to Machu Picchu in 2005 confirmed for Geraldine that she was indeed subject to altitude sickness. Brazil and the Galapagos Islands were visited in 2006-7. Their travels have provided motivation for her to further develop her skills in photography. These had begun in a modest way by producing calendars as gifts for Christmas, which proved popular as records of family events. The emergence of digital photography has provided many new possibilities, and Geraldine has grasped these opportunities with both hands. We are familiar with her photos of children in the nativity setting each year, but she also continues to produce calendars and birthday cards, as well as recording their travels.

Retirement also provides time to enjoy the next generation of their family. Richard, now a lawyer, married Sarah in 1996 and they have three children: Miranda (21), Sebastian (19) and Atticus (12); while Michael, who married Naomi (daughter of Glenys and Leighton Collins) in 1997 has Charlotte (16) and Abby (13). Michael works at the TAC in Torquay. So Robert and Geraldine hope for a long and happy retirement enjoying the company of family and friends, and the continued pleasures of music, photography and travel.



Robin Pope

A Response from Bill Norquay

I always enjoy reading *NewView* and the writing of Robin and Neil in the last issue I found most interesting. Both focused on the humanity of Jesus, an aspect that seems to be lost at times by painting an image of a “perfect child”. Having recently come through Christmas we have sung many of the old carols, with “no crying he makes”. Too often we have created in our minds an image of a perfect child who did nothing wrong and grew into an adult without a single sin or impure thought throughout his life.

Early last century the church was coming out of a very conservative period. Pope Pius X had banned women singing in church choirs and banned priests from social organisations. There were some free thinkers about and German artist Max Ernst (1891 – 1976) dared to paint a portrait of Mary with the young Jesus over her knee spanking him. Mary’s halo is still in place but the miscreant Jesus’ halo was lying on the ground. We don’t know the reason for the spanking but at the time it caused an uproar in traditional church circles. Maybe we should think a little more about the humanity of Jesus: maybe, perhaps maybe, he did earn and get the occasional spanking.



Ross McKinnon’s article about the sending out of the apostles is also a good read. I have sat through countless sermons (good and bad) about this text. However, it should be noted that when they were sent out, they were in Galilee which was a quiet and rural area of Palestine. There is another “sending out” and this has never made it to a sermon or even a reading in any service I have attended. In the days before the crucifixion in Jerusalem, which was a hotbed of religious and political activity, Jesus sends them out again but this time he tells them to get a sword and if they don’t have one, to sell a cloak to buy one. It is in Luke 22 and very few people know it is there or have read it. The point is that we need to understand the text in relation to the times they were written, not always in the quiet country times but also in the dangerous times. Unfortunately, this later text does not fit the “Gentle Jesus meek and mild” image we have created and it has been ignored.

Bill Norquay



SAMMY STAMP

Another change for 2020!

Due to Synod staff relocating to the Wesley precinct in Lonsdale Street Melbourne, Sammy and his team are on the move too. They are relocating to Trinity Uniting Church, Black St, Brighton; so save your stamp bundles until they are back in circulation. We will be advised in due course about how the collection will occur.

Now as you isolate is a great opportunity to dig out those bundles of stamps ‘saved for Sam’. If you’re trimming, please leave 3mm (1/8”) all around to allow for stamp-gripping; if you are tearing, leave plenty of paper all around including that vulnerable corner on the lower left! Remember to discard heavily postmarked, torn or sticky-taped offerings.

Sammy Stamp has already approved the first grant for the year: to Uniting Vic.Tas 2020 Bushfire Appeal for immediate assistance: \$5000.

Thanks a lot,

*from Joy Wahner
and Dorothy Graham
(for Allan Clark)*



MOUNT VIEW HUB

Last year The Hub and Mount View Primary School began an exciting activity together called the “Mount View HUB.” This involved 6 children with a hearing impairment and 3 teachers from Mount View Primary School together with 12 “Grandparents” from The Hub. The children decided to call us their “Special Friends”. We meet on a Friday afternoon 1.30-3pm at the church a few times each term, but also at some special school events.

The school is working hard to give these children with a hearing impairment, life skills to be able to grow up and participate successfully in the community. Many of these children have significantly delayed language and whilst they might smile and nod as though they have heard and understood, it may not always be the case.

This year we have 3 children from last year plus another 7 new children, also with hearing impairments, added to the group, and 14 “Special Friends”. The children range from Year 2 to Year 6. The teachers and students are all really keen to continue meeting with their “special friends” at The Hub. Some of the children keep asking the teachers at school “Is it Friday today?” They would like to come to The Hub every day!

At the start of this year all the Year 6 children at Mount View Primary School were asked to write down just 2 things they were looking forward to in Year 6. Two of the three children who came to The Hub last year wrote “The Hub” as their first thing! It seems The Hub is right up there with the Year 6 Camp and Skiing Camp!

At our first two get togethers this year we got to know a bit about the new children, played games together, listened to a story and shared afternoon tea together, the children taking our order for hot chocolate, coffee or tea. It’s amazing how much food these children can eat! They also enjoyed their hot chocolate with marshmallows. One of the boys had never had a hot chocolate before! The teachers said that both times the children talked non-stop in the cars going back to the school and they had really enjoyed their time at The Hub. They can’t wait to come again!

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our last get together for the term due to the coronavirus. We sent a card and some Easter eggs to the school for the children. The children made cards for us, their “special friends”, and wrote lovely little letters inside. Here are a few parts of their letters :

“Hi Dear Special Friends, I read your letter and I felt sorry that we can’t meet on this Friday. I want to say thank you for the Easter eggs. We couldn’t do the Easter egg hunting because of the virus, so we just ate them.”

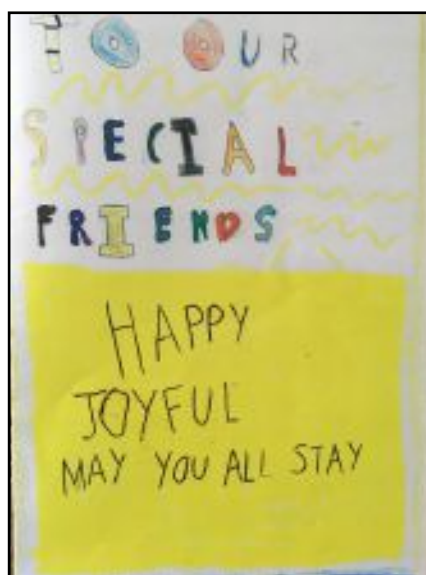
“Dear Special Friends, Sorry we couldn’t come to The Hub because of the coronavirus but we all wish to come. My favourite thing going to The Hub is probably games and yummy food especially hot chocolate with marshmallow mmmmmm. What do you like doing in The Hub with us?”

“Dear Special Friends, Unfortunate that we could not come to The Hub because there were virus, so we will come next term. Thanks for giving us Easter eggs.”

The teachers are very grateful for the time we give up and give in such a way to the children, really appreciating us helping the children to gain more confidence in speaking to people in the community. As “special friends” we are really enjoying being involved with these children and they have responded well to our time together.

Getting together with these children and their teachers, we are connecting with and growing relationships with people in the wider community.

Our HOPE is that by spending time with these children we can help them to become more confident in speaking to people in the community, and as they grow, participate more successfully in activities in the wider community.



Judith Greenwood

SUNSHINE at GWUC

In early 2013, Synod encouraged all congregations to look at ways we could reduce our carbon footprint through the use of solar hot water and solar power.

On the 25th November 2013, our congregation gave approval to the Property Committee to borrow up to \$50,000 from our financial reserves to install on the roof a 30Kw, 120 panel solar electricity system during 2014. It was understood that the capital investment repayment may take up to 8 - 10 years.

Quotes were obtained and a contract eventually awarded to *Bright Generation* to install a system comprising 3 x 10 Kw Inverters managing 40 panels each, giving us a total capacity of 30Kw, at a price of \$48,000. Bright recommended that we should use a system with 3 inverters rather than one large one, so that we would never lose all generation if any part of the system failed; and more importantly, they would be more effective in managing daily sunlight patterns. Work was completed in May 2014 and AGL switched us over to a Solar Tariff that was costing us 32 cents per KWh hour for usage and paid us 8 cents per KWh Feed In Tariff, which has now grown to **12 cents per KWh**. Some of you also enjoyed a Solar Installation in your homes by the same contractor.

At that time, we advised the congregation that our repayment of the loan would be based on future savings to our power bills against rates applicable in 2014. Annually our power bill in 2014 was totalling around \$10,000, and we knew this cost was just going to increase. Without the solar panels, our current power bills would now be in excess of \$13,000 per annum.

So each quarter we received our AGL accounts (many in credit) and the total saving was used to repay the \$48,000 internal loan.

Combined with the installation of new LED lighting in the church worship space, with ongoing power usage changes throughout the complex, and with updating old ovens, replacing blanket ceiling heating in the church with efficient Inverter Air Conditioners etc, we succeeded in reducing our total carbon footprint in 2019 to NIL. These changes were made as equipment failed and required normal replacement.

We have also installed solar power to our 15 Southdown Ave manse in 2020 and the others will be done as and when funds are available.



I am really excited to share with you that 3 years earlier than expected, the full \$48,000 loan has been repaid and we are now able to direct those annual savings generated by the solar panels to other needs.

For those that enjoy the numbers let me also share with you a fact from our February 2020 Quarter power bill (Dec to Feb):

- we used 2,847 KWh of power; and
- we received a *Feed In Tariff* rebate on 8603 KWh at 12 cents per KWh.

That's correct, **we fed into the grid, 3 times as much power as we used in Summer 2019.** We paid nothing for our power in Summer 2019/20.

These savings will continue for another 10 to 15 years or more. And there is no doubt that energy costs will rise, almost as often as the sun.

The system has far exceeded our expectations and calculations. So added to the concerted effort by the Property Committee to convert our property to LED lighting throughout and lower the cost of energy, which have been strongly supported by the Finance Committee, the Treasurer and Church Council, it has enabled the Glen Waverley Uniting Church to achieve the Synod request of 2013, to "*significantly reduce our carbon footprint*".

Congratulations to everyone for being willing to support this project, and the other energy reduction initiatives, which will provide a stronger financial future for Glen Waverley Uniting Church and a better outcome for the wider community, without any impact on our normal activities.

The sun has certainly shone on the Glen Waverley Uniting Church.

Keep safe.

Warren Greenwood
Chairperson -
Property Committee



Activities
at the
Glen Waverley
Uniting Church

BOOK SALE



Thanks go to the hard-working team of volunteers who were responsible for our successful book sale on February 29. \$5405.35 was raised, the best total ever! Most of the unsold books were taken by the Yarragon Emergency Services for their annual book sale, with five other good causes also taking books.



The Chartres Labyrinth: A Meditative Exercise

In the Middle Ages, most people did not read and were much more orientated to the senses than we are today. Many Christians vowed to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem once during their lives, to walk where Jesus walked.



However, by the twelfth century, this pilgrimage had become dangerous because of the Crusades, so, as an alternative, the church appointed 'pilgrimage' cathedrals, and many had labyrinths, most of which have been lost.

The plan of the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral in France, the best preserved one today, is on the adjacent page. It was installed into the floor of the cathedral about the year 1205. There is just one path into the centre, and the same path out again. There are no tricks or false paths as in a maze. This particular one is of 11 circuits, is 13 metres in diameter, and the walk is a little over half a kilometre.

As one walked into the centre, most often in silence, the mind quietened and after maybe a centring prayer or meditation, one returned on the same path, often coming away with feelings of peace and serenity, joy or insight, or maybe, forgiveness. Apparently in the latter instance, those seeking forgiveness would go to the centre on their knees!

Last year, I experienced this 'walking a spiritual path' at the Ewing Centre of Stonnington Uniting Church. This 7 circuit labyrinth was marked onto canvas; the paths we followed were about 60 cm wide, and only 3 or 4 people took part at the same time. I was a bit uncertain of what to expect, or how I would react. However, I soon found that in concentrating on following the complex path, my mind quietened, and I became very conscious of the pattern and order of the labyrinth. You walk close to the centre, and find yourself yourself moving away again. The final steps to the centre actually came as quite a surprise.

To experience something of this for yourself, trace the path on the adjacent image with your finger.

Alison Barr



It's All a Matter of Choice

In a recent address to the nation, Scott Morrison warned us that whatever we do in this corona pandemic, we do for six months. Shaun Micallef in his MAD AS HELL program was concerned because he had planned to tidy his garden shed. Let us all think twice.

Whatever We Do

Whatever we do, we do for six months, so whatever you choose keep away from labyrinths.

Shaun had decided to tidy his shed; I hope it's not where red-back spiders have bred.

Under the sheets Kathy reads by torchlight, does she realise those batteries don't last through the night?

Atlas the Titan will sigh with relief, but the celestial heavens will come to great grief.

Whatever we do, we do for six months, so whatever you choose keep away from absinthe.

Don't tighten your belt, or you'll starve a long while; don't buy toilet paper to start a stockpile.

Will you want tinned tomatoes day after day, broccoli, kale, even café au lait?

Lord High Execution's list will be long, will his voice survive to keep singing his song?

God save us from bushfires, COVID 19, save us all from the daily routine.

We'd rather not hear long monologues, or hold on high those little ground hogs.

But we'll stay inside if that's what it takes.

Anne Cook

My sister worked for many years at Mowle Village in Sydney. She retired from that a few years ago but at 85 she still goes in on a volunteer basis to help the old people. A couple of years ago I gave her a few crosses and they were very well received and she regularly gets some more. There have been many positive comments from the patients and their families. Recently a recipient gave her a small poem that she thought was very appropriate.

The Cross in My Pocket

I carry a cross in my pocket - a simple reminder to me
Of the fact I am a Christian, no matter where I may be.

This little cross is not magic, nor is it a good luck charm
It isn't meant to protect me from every physical harm.

It is not an identification for all the world to see
It's simply an understanding, between my Saviour and me.

When I put my hand in my pocket to bring out a coin or a key
The cross is there to remind me of the price He paid for me.

It reminds me, too, to be thankful for my blessings day by day,
And strive to serve Him better in all that I do or say.

It is also a daily reminder of the peace and comfort I share
With all who know my Master and give themselves to His care

So I carry a cross in my pocket, reminding no-one but me
That Jesus Christ is Lord of my life - if only I'll let him be

Verna Mae Thomas

Bill Norquay

CORONA DAYS DIARY AT NUMBER 56

My Little Yellow Hoe

I went to Aldi yesterday
 Found a little yellow hoe.
 From the nursery bought a tray,
 Planted lettuce row on row.
 To fight Corona is the trick
 None of us wants to be sick.
 I'd like the virus to boycott,
 Eating greens will be just right.
 But slugs and snails came out last night
 Ate the whole bloomin' lot.



The poem is rough and ready, but Corona Days are busy days. To make a good punch line, there is some 'poetic licence'. The slugs and snails didn't come and we have a fine crop of lettuce varieties to use in our salads. Gardening is providing sunshine and fresh air after long spells on the computer and on the phone. The autumn days are sunny and mild this March. There is always some weeding to potter over, bushes to trim back, birds to watch as they and the bees feast on the nectar in our salvia Waverley bushes and the correa near the family room window. I am waiting to see if the Eastern Spinebill returns this year to join the banquet. The lorikeets have decided to roost at evening in one of the trees in the side street opposite. Set up constant chatter as they settle.

On the Sunday of our first live-stream services, I enjoyed watching both 9:15 and 11:00. What a great effort everyone had put in for that and also last Sunday's presentation. Especially with the ever-tightening restrictions. After lunch on the first Sunday of the new era, I had an early afternoon kip, then went into the front garden to pull a few weeds. Half the time was spent exchanging a wave or word with neighbours and passing walkers with dogs. Kenneth and his little white dog stopped for a long chat about the virus. All practising social distancing.



It's important to keep up appearances. Two rose bushes needed removal. While Bill did the dig-out, I set a vase of the last blooms on the hall table. They add cheerfulness to the hallway.

Both of us are busy on the phone answering and ringing friends. Everyone is keen to keep in touch and share corona days' experiences. Bill's golfing friend is not on the internet, and is hard of hearing, so his wife has just rung to see if Dorset Golf Club is still open. Quick call-up on our computer and we can report that the course is temporarily closed. Another bank friend plays four times a week; all his golf courses are closed. Big change in life style.

Last Sunday we walked as far as Diamond Ave. Thelma was in the garden trimming back some plants, so keeping our distance, we stopped for a chat.

The Cabbage White butterflies are still fluttering around the kale. Good or bad depending on your taste! Ever the humorist, Bill quipped that it is a pity we haven't a glass fronted dishwasher. Give us something to watch, fill in our days.

Hope everyone keeps virus free. Regards and prayers, Anne Cook.

ISOLATION

Separated; on your own, isolation can be a very small world.

Mine is a medical separation. Renal failure causes me to spend three afternoons each week on dialysis to clean my blood. My social group meetings have gone.

The coronavirus has merely closed things down a little more.

Family and friends surround me and help me keep going when I wilt. At times I feel corralled. What do I do to stop going crazy?

How do I practise social distancing when all I want is a social existence?
For me, telephone calls, reading and writing to friends or those in trouble are some ways that help.

What would you do?

Through the coming days the church must overcome the effects of isolation and show that we continue in communion, “we are here” for others.

Living out the sacrament of communion is symbolic of the continuing presence of Jesus. Each time you eat and drink, remember him.

Graeme Frecker

LIGHT

*One sees the candle
another the flame
a third the reflections
but
who sees the light*

*Only those
whom the light
has entered
who know
and have become
one with the light*

P G Baker

News from the Justice and International Mission Cluster

Supporting Vulnerable People and Migrant Workers During the Pandemic

April 1st, 2020

When a foreigner resides with you in your land, you must not oppress him. You must treat the foreigner living among you as native-born and love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. - Leviticus 19:33-34

The Commonwealth and State Governments in Australia have provided positive support to people and businesses who will be impacted by the coronavirus crisis. Part of the package that has been put in place is an extra \$550 a fortnight payment to people on the following social security payments; JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance jobseeker, Parenting Payment, Farm Household Allowance and Special Benefit. "This means anyone eligible for the maximum Jobseeker payment will now receive more than \$1,100 a fortnight, effectively doubling the Jobseeker allowance," Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said. The extra funds are to assist the hundreds of thousands of people who will lose their jobs as a result of the measures needed to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

At the moment, around 1.5 million people living in Australia on temporary visas are not eligible for the support payment. Many people on temporary or provisional visas in Australia cannot access standard social security support, such as income and disability support programs. They also are not eligible to access other government services. These include many people who have applied for asylum in Australia.

Many of these people are no longer able to return to their home countries with flights being cancelled and borders being closed. In the second week of March, the Justice and International Mission cluster worked in collaboration with Uniting Church members in Warragul to assist three seasonal workers from Vanuatu who had planned to fly home on Friday 20 March. The day before they were to fly home, the JIM cluster was advised by the Vanuatu High Commission in Canberra that the workers would not be allowed to board the flight home. They would need to leave Australia and spend 14 days in a third country. They would then need to be tested to ensure they did not have the coronavirus before they would be allowed into Vanuatu. In effect, these restrictions make it impossible for the people from Vanuatu working in Australia to be able to return home at this time. The congregation members in Warragul organised for the flights to be cancelled. The congregation members also arranged for the men from Vanuatu to be able to continue to work at the vegetable processing facility they have been working at. However, their current visas will soon run out and need to be extended.

Minister Alan Tudge, the Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, was reported in The Australian newspaper as having stated: 'We also know there are a number of temporary visa holders in Australia who are unable to return home or who have skills that will be in high demand during this crisis, including in health, aged care, agriculture and other essential service. We are focused on this and have been working with industry to provide more flexibility in relation to visas and conditions. The aim is to ensure businesses can continue to operate and temporary migrants can continue to support themselves, and help Australia, during this crisis. Further, at this time, there is a need to ensure that people living temporarily in Australia have access to Medicare. Access to Medicare will encourage them to seek medical assistance at the first sign they may have coronavirus.'

The JIM cluster has experience of people from the Pacific Islands on the Australian Seasonal Worker Program delaying seeking medical assistance until they are very ill. The reasons they have done this is because they do not get paid if they are not working, they have no entitlement to sick leave. Secondly, their access to the Australian healthcare system is only through private health insurance, where they are often forced to make large upfront payments. They then have to apply for reimbursement from the private health insurance corporation. It places the broader community at risk if a person living temporarily in Australia contracts the coronavirus and delays seeking medical advice and assistance.

The Commonwealth Government will need to take reasonable steps to ensure that any payments and support are made to people who have a genuine need. There have been tens of thousands of people who have come to Australia from countries such as Malaysia, China, India, Vietnam and Indonesia and have made fraudulent claims for asylum. These people often have employment lined up in Australia and misuse Australia's humanitarian program as a work visa program. Having demonstrated their willingness to engage in fraudulent behaviour, people in this group may make further fraudulent claims to gain social security payments they do not have a genuine need for.

What You Can Do

Write polite and respectful letters to:

The Hon Alan Tudge MP
Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship,
Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Salutation: Dear Minister

Points to make in your letters:

- Thank the government for the steps they have taken to support people during the coronavirus crisis.
- Ask that they extend support payments to all people living in Australia at this time who need them. Note that many people on temporary visas are unable to return home and are not eligible for existing social security payments. No person should be left destitute due to the current crisis.
- Acknowledge the government will need to implement reasonable measures to ensure the payments are made to those that genuinely need them. Acknowledge there will always be people who will seek to make fraudulent claims.
- Further, note that Minister Tudge has already been reported in the media as working to extend the visas of people who are living in Australia and are unable to return to their home countries. State your support for this outcome and request that such people be permitted to work in Australia.
- Also, request that people living temporarily in Australia should be given access to Medicare at this time. Point out the serious health risks to these people and the wider community if they contract coronavirus and delay seeking medical advice and assistance because they do not have easy access to healthcare.

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

You've done all your jigsaws,
played all your board games. Now...

- Play 'pick-up-sticks' using a bunch of pencils, chopsticks, knitting needles, - or sticks!
- Have a karaoke concert with your favourite CDs, or using Spotify or other streaming services
- Teach the kids how to play patience (so they can occupy themselves alone)
- Build houses out of playing cards
- Teach them a new card game
- Teach them how to play chess
- Set up a regular Facetime/Skype online with friends/grandparents. Read a story to them!
- Create an art gallery and choose a theme for the art today: portraits, pets, scenes, activities etc
- Get them to help cooking their favourite meal or 'treat'
- Decorate plain biscuits (or make them!) with funny icing faces
- Have a regular exercise session for the whole family after running laps around the house
- Make a banner for a special occasion or person and show it on your device to the person concerned
- Have a memory game, collecting 20 small random items from the house and displaying on a tray for a minute. Who can write/remember down the most items? Or remove one or two -Who knows what is missing?
- Do some light pruning in the garden. Show the kids how to use secateurs, and how and where to cut. Have a weeding session - show them what is a weed first!
- Count how many different flowers/trees/shrubs you can see from your window.
- Prepare a small garden bed and plant some seeds/seedlings. Check and tend daily.
- Clean out the cubby house - or build a new one inside using boxes/chairs/sheets etc
- Go for a family walk. Choose your favourite house/fence/roof-line/ window/garden/
- Did you see any teddy bears in people's windows? Have you put one in yours?
- Design your perfect house - show them how to read/draw a floor plan
- Learn a new skill on the internet: knitting, dancing, sewing, exercising, cooking, learning a new language, origami, toymaking, playing a musical instrument...
- Visit an art gallery on-line(ngv.gov.au) #NGVEveryDay on social media. See 'Kids at Home' ideas
- Go to the zoo at zoo.org.au and check on the progress of the snow leopard cubs or see the animals at Werribee Zoo and Healesville
- Watch the free live streaming (limited time) of Andrew Lloyd Weber's musicals at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdmPjHKMAXNNeCrIFjUMVag/videos>
- Give the kids a 'special' book to start keeping their 'coronavirus diary' with daily entries/photos
- Show them how to clean/oil/maintain their bikes/skateboards/scooters then go for a family ride
- Construct a family trivia competition using photos -who is this person? /where did we do/see this? /what happened on this occasion?/what were we celebrating?
- Make a bowling alley with empty plastic bottles and rolled-up socks for balls
- Establish an agreed time each day for quiet activities (reading/viewing/snoozing)

And then...tell them you love them!

From April *Newsbeat*, p. 8

May God bless you with vision
when you cast out into uncharted waters.

May God bless you with patience
when you navigate uncertain times.

May God bless you with discernment
when you look to the heavens for signs.

May God bless you with courage
when your friends are sick with fear.

May God bless you with trust
when you feel you are sinking.

May God bless you with hope
when you sense that Christ hears your cry.

May God bless you with peace
when you find yourself on the way home.

May the Creator God
who brooded over the waters
and parted the sea,
the Christ who walked on the ocean
who is Living Water,
the Spirit who baptises
and fills to overflowing
be with you today and every day.

Amen

A prayer by Craig Mitchell

HELP NEWVIEW!

The current editor intends to hand over the reins to someone else no later than July 2021, as she feels it is time for someone younger to bring a fresh approach to *NewView* (or whatever future communication platform is used).

Would you like to be part of an editorial team?

Perhaps you can help in one or more of the following tasks:

- providing reports, photos, reviews, articles
- acting as a scout for material of interest
- editing submissions
- assisting with proof-reading
- leading and coordinating a team

For a confidential, obligation-free discussion, get in touch with Robin Pope, at popesr@aapt.net.au or 9753 3648. **All** enquiries welcome!

From April *Newsbeat*, p. 6

A Holy Week Prayer
by Craig Mitchell

*God of mystery
Beyond our comprehension
always behind and before us
always beneath and above us
You confound us*

*Who are you, who shapes
such unlikely images of yourself and then risks all
so we might inherit your true likeness?*

*Who are you, who sends
your rebel child to live down our street
and then dares us to reclaim
our true childhood through him?*

*Who is he, this God-Child
who frustrates his parents
hangs around with the wrong crowd
questions the town council
is picked up by the local cops
and through all remains a source
of goodness, compassion and truth?*

*Good of stories and histories
open the door for us
to re-enter and re-live this 'unholy' week
full of longing and loss,
lies and truth,
shame and forgiveness,
trust and rejection.*

*In these coming days
we may both lose ourselves
and find ourselves
in the dusty arena of grace.
This will be one crowded hour.
Walk it with us, we pray*

*God of all who fear and suffer
may these days be a watching and listening
for unexpected grace,
for unquenchable hope,
for unreasonable truth
in the face of all that denies abundant life
We seek You, Suffering Christ. Amen*

