



InSpire



NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 10, no 10

November 2024



(Who is the painter? What is this scene? See back page for answer)

InSpiring

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Still Thinking Children's Prayers (well maybe)



The following prayers are reported to be from children. Many contain that wonderful sense of

naivety and yet the truth about life. Children who are loved and nurtured, live in an enchanted world where anything is possible and all is well. So, they tend to be imaginative and creative in their conversations with adults. It is only when we respond in disbelief or with alternative explanations that they begin the journey of leaving the enchanted garden that they have lived in since birth. Sadly, it is a journey they must take if they are to mature into adulthood. But hopefully they (we) don't completely lose the imaginative simplicity of that enchanted world.

Sometime ago, my four year old grandson was visiting with us. He became intrigued with the coffee table book we had on Australian animals. What captured his imagination were the pictures of salt water crocodiles. Later that day he was with Anne on our deck looking out over the treed and bushy reserve opposite the house. He said to Anne, "There's a crocodile down there in the bush." "Really, well let's go and find him." Exclaimed Anne. "No, we can't," he replied, "Why not," said Anne. "Because he's asleep." So, he had to confront his own imagination and find a way to reconcile it with reality.

I think prayer is a naïve religious practice. In fact, true prayer comes from the heart. We are uncertain what to say, and to whom or (what) we are praying to. Nevertheless, when all hope is lost, for many there is little else to do than pray to that which is beyond us.

Here are some ways in which children imagine God, whom they have heard about in church or Sunday school or from their parents and friends. Of course, it is not only children who have to integrate life's mystery with their own experience, we adults also have to do it. ¹

Dear God, In Sunday School they told us what you do. Who does it when you are on vacation?

Dear God, I think about you sometimes even when I'm not praying.

Dear God, I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday.

Dear God, did you mean for the giraffe to look like that or was it an accident?

Dear God, Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you have now?

Dear God, What does it mean you are a Jealous God? I thought you had everything.

Dear God, It must be super hard to love all the people in the world, especially my brother. I don't know how you do it.

Dear God, I went to this wedding and they were kissing right there in church. Is that OK?

Dear Lord, Do you draw the lines around the countries? If you don't, who does?

Dear Lord, Is Reverend Dan a friend of yours or do you just know him through the business?

Christopher

¹ These children prayers are taken from an American Religious Education Magazine. I can't vouch for their authenticity.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW MINISTER UPDATE

There has been no material progress in our search for a new minister since the report in the October issue of InSpire. No further candidates have been advanced for a conversation by Synod Placements Committee following its most recent two meetings. As a result, the JNC has not needed to meet during the past month.

Expanding the scope of our advertising campaign and using personal interstate and New Zealand contacts to draw attention to our Ministerial Vacancy are now planned

Dick Carter

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT *Joyce Jenkin*

Kerrie Davies and Peter Grossman have kindly offered to continue taking responsibility for purchasing items for the monthly lunches and council expresses our thanks to them.

We also thank Rev Terry Trewavas for filling in for Rev Chris Page for seven weeks; his insights were greatly appreciated.

Members of the congregation are encouraged to look at the fountain which has been installed near the Memorial Garden, it is not yet fully operational but soon will be.

Due to the resignations of Cheryl Jenkins and Colin Jenkins, which take effect from the end of the year, we are looking for a part time Director of Music from the beginning of 2025. We wish to express our appreciation for Cheryl and Colin's musical leadership over the years.

Jane Lama's title has been changed to Manager Administration in recognition of her ten years of service to us.

OBITUARY

Rev John Smith Pioneer of Progressive Christianity in Australia

Rev John WH Smith, a pioneer of the progressive Christianity movement in Australia, died on 16 October 2024 aged eighty-four.



John began his working life as a carpenter. After studying at Queens College Theological Hall, Melbourne and Social Work at the University of Melbourne he was ordained a Methodist Minister in 1974 when he was thirty-four. Even before ordination he had a keen interest in the welfare of the disadvantaged and people with disabilities and the first twenty-six years of his ordained ministry was devoted to these causes, mostly in Adelaide.

During the 1990s, John rekindled his interest in New Testament scholarship with a specific interest in Christ before Christianity. He became a close follower of the Westar Institute's Jesus Seminar and the writings of its Scholars, particularly Robert Funk, John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, Robert Miller, Bishop John Shelby

Spong and others. The work of Australian author, Michael Morwood, also made a significant impression on him.

After returning to Melbourne in 2001, John took up a position as Coordinator – Outreach Ministries with the Commission for Mission of the UCA Synod of Victoria.

In 2003 he accepted a call to Ministry from Ewing Memorial UC, East Malvern where key members of the congregation had become interested in progressive Christianity and were looking for a Minister to lead their further development of this interest. In this, John was successful and, as a result, he and Dick Carter, Chairperson of Ewing's Church Council, and their wives, took the step of attending the 2005 Westar Institute's Fall meeting in Santa Rosa, California where they were mightily enthused by mixing with a large crowd of progressive Christian Scholars and Associate Members. Coincidentally, Rev Rex A E Hunt, then Minister of a Canberra UC congregation and founder of the ACT's Centre for Progressive Religious Thought, also attended this Santa Rosa meeting.

After the experience in California, John with Dick Carter, Lorna Henry, and other Ewing members were motivated to find a way to further the progressive Christian cause in Victoria. As a consequence, representatives of some likeminded groups in Melbourne were invited to discuss possibilities and from this the Progressive Christian Network of Victoria (PCNV) was formed early in 2006. From this beginning the PCNV has since provided its members and their friends with a broad range of programs featuring progressive Christian scholars and authors. There has also been an ecumenical element in the PCNV's work with liberal representatives of other faiths included in its programs.

Elsewhere in 2006, Rex Hunt, Rev Dr Greg Jenks (then Academic Dean of St Francis Theological College, Brisbane), and Jonathon Rae (a

member of Pitt Street UC, Sydney) were separately working on a project to stage an international conference in Australia focussed on progressive Christianity and John joined this group as a representative of the PCNV. This initiative gave birth to the very successful 2007 Common Dreams conference in Sydney with a remarkable line up of international speakers (anchored by Bishop John Spong) and leading Australian and New Zealand progressive figures. A further four Common Dreams conferences followed at three-yearly intervals and John was involved in the planning of each one.

As his active ministry began to wind down, John fulfilled a long-term ambition and turned his hand to publishing books on progressive Christianity and related topics. He and Rex Hunt collaborated in editing two collections of cameos, essays, and articles – “Why Weren't We Told?” (2012, Polebridge Press) and “New Life, Rediscovering Faith” (2015, Morning Star Publishing). Then followed two books of his own - “Honest to Go0d: Discerning the sacred in the secular” (2016, Morning Star Publishing) and “Jesus & the Empowering Influence of Friendship” (2020, Coventry Press). These works were received with considerable acclaim in Australia and internationally.

John and his wife Robyn retired to Cowes on Phillip Island. Sadly, this did not bring the serenity that was wished for and for the last two or three years he was living alone in high care accommodation as he subsided into dementia. His cause of death was dementia and complications from what seems to have been a disabling stroke and pneumonia. He is survived by Robyn, their three children Adam, Simon, and Emma and partners, and four grandchildren.

A celebration of John's life will be held at the Ewing Memorial Centre, Stonnington Community Uniting Church, 57-59 Burke Road Malvern East, at 2.30pm on Friday 1 November.

Richard J Carter AM

MEMORIAL GARDEN Water Feature Project

The Memorial Garden is a much-valued feature of Stonnington Community Uniting Church. Many of us have gained comfort from having the cremated remains of our loved ones respectfully interred in this place, and as we pass the Memorial Garden we are warmly reminded of their individual and collective contribution to our community.

The late Jim Fyvie is a former member of the Ewing Church whose ready smile and kindly manner endeared him to all who had the good fortune to know him. He made an enthusiastic and energetic contribution to the life of our church community over many years. He willingly applied his considerable practical skills to our benefit and did much to repair and maintain our Church buildings as well as actively participating in many other aspects of the life of the church.

Following Jim's passing his family kindly donated money to the church for use as we saw fit but with the indication they hoped that it may be used towards installing a water feature in or near the Memorial Garden.

The Church Council gave much consideration to this proposal over an extended period and undertook extensive research into the merits of various different options. We are particularly grateful to Sue McGrath who scoured the internet and visited a number of garden suppliers and consulted widely to enable the Council to make a very well-informed decision.

The water feature has now been installed in the garden immediately to the east of the Memorial Garden and we are confident that it will enhance the environs of that Garden in a manner conducive to remembrance, peace and reflection.



The cost of the project exceeds the donation made by the Fyvie family and the Church Council resolved to invite all members and friends of the parish prayerfully to consider supporting this project with a one-off donation towards the full cost of the installation. The target of our appeal is \$3,000.

We have already received several donations for this purpose.

The Church Council commends this appeal for your consideration.

Alan Sandbach

for the Church Council

CAFÉ CHURCH

September 29 was Café Church. Rev Terry Trewavas invited retired minister, theologian and poet Rev Dr Denham Grierson as guest. The dialogue centred on a selection of Denham's published poetry. Asked about his life and ministry, we learned that Denham hailed from Bendigo. He experienced a sense of call through an encounter with God, and was ordained as a Methodist minister. He was sent first to minister at a Tasmanian HEP village, and later became Director of Youth Education in the Methodist Church. He did further study at the University of

Chicago, and became Professor of Theological Education there. Terry testified that studying under Denham in Melbourne equipped him for his own ministry.



Denham is more than a theologian; he is also a prolific poet and has published several volumes of poetry. This is one of the four poems that we were invited to listen to and discuss in groups.

God Consciousness

How did God conscientiousness come to you?
Suddenly, as a lightning bolt illuminating
A dark and threatening sky
Gradually as a realisation that love
Had grown, a small seed into a spreading tree
Or from mother's milk, always there
Deeply indwelling, invisible friend
A sense of presence growing brighter

And did that realisation invoke in you
A life, larger, richer, more satisfying
Filled with a yeasting delight in itself
A sense of more, expanding into newness
Where beauty and joy and possibility
Broke out into a glorious technicolour
Of awareness of otherness everywhere

And did it change the world for you
Not just its physicality, but the hidden energies
Moving deeply in all things as sap
Flowing into branch and twig to Spring
Bursting forth in wonder and delight
Where what is the personal you
Named itself afresh and on the way
Was that what God consciousness gave you

And did you become freer, more gentle
At ease with silence, at rest in stillness
Able to reach out to others
Without shame, or doubt, or fear
Discovering a deep current of purpose
At work in all you did and contemplated
Finding yourself at home in life's deepest meaning
Was that what God consciousness gave to you.



STEPHEN McALLISTER

Stephen, who was the only son of Keith and Grace and younger brother of Elizabeth McAllister, has been widely mourned since his untimely passing on 23 September 2024. I am honoured to share these reflections of Steve's life having known him since the early 1960s and enjoyed a long friendship with him and his family. I acknowledge my debt to the eulogists at his funeral in preparing these reflections.

Stephen was born on 27 July 1958 and grew up in East Malvern. He joined the 13th Malvern (Ewing Memorial) Scout Group as a Cub and quickly rose to the leadership rank of Sixer as a patrol leader. He continued on to other leadership roles in the Group and is fondly remembered by those who knew him then as a kindly (not a common characteristic among young boys in the culture of the 1960s) leader, who always encouraged others to do their best.



Although Stephen was always pleased to share what he had (again not a common characteristic of young boys in the 1960s) he was also a very active and energetic boy who engaged in a bit of mischief on occasion. He and Elizabeth were required and expected to do homework and music practice after school while awaiting their parents' return from work. Stephen recorded some violin practice and set up the tape recorder to play it whilst he and Elisabeth would watch television until a car was heard in the driveway. They got away with this for a while until Keith took to checking the back of the TV on his return home to see whether it was warm!

Stephen was educated at a local primary school then at Wesley College. Enthusiastic participation in his chosen sports of rowing, hockey and cross-country running was curtailed by a serious back injury suffered on a Duke of Edinburgh hike. This injury plagued him for many years after leaving school, but never dimmed his very positive approach to life or his keen sense of humour.

After completing HSC Stephen studied agricultural management at Dookie Agricultural College. Whilst studying there Stephen met Dianne Poole at the Shepparton Baptist Church. They married on 6 June 1981. Steve's sense of

humour was on display in the lead up to the wedding. He managed to convince Grace that he and all his groomsmen were going to wear a particularly gaudy and inappropriate tie on the occasion. He achieved this by parading the groomsmen past Grace separately so that she did not realise that the same tie was being passed by one groomsman to another out of her sight. Only after Grace had reached a high state of apoplexy did Steve reveal that the tie in question had been acquired for that sole purpose.

After a few years of very happy married life Stephen and Dianne were blessed with the arrival of a daughter, Amy, and then a son, Joshua. Amy and Joshua each married and, with their respective spouses, have since delighted their parents with seven grandchildren between them.

Following graduation from Dookie Stephen became a sharefarmer on a dairy farm. This work exacerbated his back injury; so, in 1984, with Keith's assistance, he turned to horticulture and began growing cut flowers on the family property at Labertouche. Steve experienced many of the challenges of life on the land. On one occasion a wild hailstorm destroyed his annual crop of cornflowers. He also experienced severe drought, a freak tornado which blew off the roof of the farmhouse and the family was burnt out in the Black Saturday bushfires.

Despite these challenges Stephen and Dianne created a beautiful family home surrounded by a lovely garden animated by a great sense of fun and a warm and genuine welcome for all who had the good fortune to visit. Stephen's kindness knew no bounds. He was always looking for ways to help others. Whenever he could make the lives of others easier or better, he was there to help and always with a twinkle in his eye.

In 1998 Stephen began work off the farm as campus administrator of the newly established Pakenham campus of Chairo Christian College. The College had purchased a derelict farm of some 40 acres and Steve was one of the

founders who (literally) built a Christian college on the site. Whatever task needed to be done, whether it be building or carpentry work, or cleaning or repairing toilets or teaching sport, Steve threw himself into it with characteristic enthusiasm and skill. On any one day he might be found treading muddy paddocks in gumboots, changing into a suit and tie to interview prospective students and then into sports clothes to conduct a sports lesson. Whilst very busy at school he simultaneously undertook a teacher training course by distance education (with many assignments submitted at 11.59pm on the due day). His dedication and widely recognised leadership skills saw him appointed as Principal of the Pakenham campus of the College. He is the only person to have served as both Chair of the Board of the College and as a campus Principal. His contribution to the school was recognised in 2019 by the naming of a new facility as the S. McAllister Design and Technology Centre. One imagines that Steve felt wryly amused as well as honoured as he had begun teaching technology at Pakenham under a tree and was excited when that was upgraded to a shed. By the time Steve had decided to retire from his principalship at Chairo he had grown the school from a handful of original students to a flourishing school of 700 students spanning Prep to Year 12.

Between 2018 and 2023 Stephen worked for Baw Baw Shire as team leader responsible for home services for the Aged. He built a strong a cohesive team and, as ever, took the most difficult tasks upon himself.

Throughout his life Stephen was animated by a strong Christian faith full of hope and optimism. This found expression in many ways but none more extraordinary than his work through the Drouin Baptist Church. Steve was one of the founders of the Church in 1985. The congregation initially met in the local CWA Hall. Having outgrown that it moved to a local primary school hall. The congregation then purchased its own land and set about constructing its first

church building. Steve was regularly involved in numerous working bees to that end. He also made the first lectern and subsequently fashioned a pulpit for the church.

Stephen's involvement with the Drouin Baptist Church encompassed roles as Deacon, youth group leader, bible study leader, church treasurer and Elder. His grace, good humour and humility were hallmarks of his exemplary Christian servant leadership. Abundant love, joy and hope shone through him and the Drouin congregation soon found it necessary to build an extension to the original church building which more than doubled the size of the church complex.

Stephen's Christian service extended well beyond his local area. He played key roles in State wide and national Christian conventions and assemblies. He was also called upon to serve as Chair of the international board of Deaf Ministries International and as secretary of the Australian board of that organisation.

Stephen faced his final illness with characteristic steadfastness and good humour. At the end his chief concern was for those caring for him. His was a faith filled with hope and optimism.

Stephen's funeral was held at the Drouin Baptist Church which he had done so much to build up. The Church complex was filled to overflowing by more than six hundred mourners and more than one thousand mourners have viewed the very moving service on-line. He is much missed but leaves a living legacy of children and grandchildren shaped by their relationship with him and who have developed a vibrant Christian faith like his.

Alan Sandbach

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT

Lorna Henry

It is with deep sadness that we learned of the death of Rev. John Smith, who in the first year of his ministry at Ewing, encouraged the formation of a group to talk about matters of faith and new understandings of the Christian message. So, we began this group in February 2005.

John insisted that it be a lay group, but he offered and gave constant vital support. We owe him a great deal for his scholarship and enthusiastic encouragement.

We remember John with much affection and gratitude.

There's a lot going on in the world which is deeply troubling. It was time to seek 'something for the spirit', and we did just that in October.

All of us sought out a poem or piece of writing around a wide-open theme of blessing, resilience, faith, encouragement and anything else to cheer the spirit.

We then enjoyed hearing these read aloud by each person, bringing inspiration and comfort: from the Bible Psalm 8 and Isaiah 40, poems by Mary Oliver, Gerard Manley Hopkins, John Masfield, Leunig and Glynn Cardy and others including Banjo Paterson's 'Clancy of the Overflow'.

One of the early ideas which gave us joy was the beauty and awesomeness of the open country and its brilliant night sky, which we in the city are denied. The awesomeness of the universe, and on the smaller scale, of the human body and mind.

We heard that 'to improve a situation, you sometimes need to destroy'. There is comfort in knowing that out of destruction, sadness and loss, something new and good can emerge. Relevant here was mention of Peter Goldsworthy's new book 'The Cancer Finishing School', his personal account of the experience of cancer.

An unknown local poet, Keith Dempster, in his poem Endgame, describes the ambitions and hopes we have at all stages in our lives. He finishes with these words:

What is the real essence of who you are?
If, when you have finally shed this shell,
All you leave are love, kindness, peace
and care,
Then Sister, Brother, you have done well.

And Leunig, in his similar simplicity, writes

The dreaming heart will turn to sweet
creation
To other worlds, to joyous revelation
Turn around and see the distant star
Turn off the screen
Turn off the car
Turn this crazy heartache into care.

It was, as hoped, a time of 'something for the spirit'.

Looking to November, the Sunday for our meeting is the same as SCUC's Forum on Homelessness at 3.00pm, Sunday 17th. We have agreed that we will meet as usual that day, following on from the Forum for further discussion. We will officially meet at 5.00, but if it is more convenient to come earlier or later because of the Forum, that will be expected and welcomed. Come as it suits you...

...Because, our gathering will also be a chance to celebrate 20 years of SFTS and all who have been part of it!

LIBRARY NEWS

Faye Pattinson

Our next Book Chat will be held on Thursday, 21st November at 10.30 am in the Margaret McKinnon room. All welcome with or without a book to share. Come and listen, have a coffee (or tea) and chat.

Here are two of the books brought to our last Book Chat.

Odd One Out by Monica McInerney. Sylvie has always been the odd one out in her family. Her mother is a celebrated artist, known for her bohemian lifestyle. Her father, long estranged from the family, is a respected poet and

academic. Sylvie's two beautiful sisters and her big brother are also making their mark in the design world. Sylvie hasn't an artistic bone in her body. On the verge of turning thirty, back living in the family home in Sydney and working for her mother and sisters, she feels stuck in a major rut. Then her brother Sebastian steps in with a rescue plan. He offers her a room in his Melbourne apartment for as long as she likes, on one condition. In an updated version of a treasure hunting game they played as children, she has to follow his instructions and go exploring the city.

Audrey's Gone AWOL by Annie de Monchaux. It's never too late to reinvent your life. Audrey Lamont has happily devoted herself to family life for the best part of 40 years, but lately she's become aware that she lost herself somewhere between 'I do' and the weekly shop. Worse, her academic husband Simon has found time for romance – just not with Audrey. Feeling invisible to everyone, even herself, she flees to her aunt's home in rural France. While waiting for her sudden absence to spark a change of heart in Simon, Audrey finds solace in the charms of the French countryside and the company of her aged aunt and a cast of eccentric Bretons. But soon Audrey discovers going AWOL might do more than save her marriage, it might change her life ... *Audrey's Gone AWOL* is a funny and beautifully observed story about losing yourself, finding yourself, and discovering joy

Have you browsed our catalogue on our new website? You may be surprised at some of the books we hold in our collection!

AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP

Jan Riches

We met on Monday, 21st October and took part in a quiz devised by Sue McGrath, a member of our little group. The 40 questions were very varied and certainly tested our general knowledge and our memories; one was "who was the first man on the moon?" and for some, it was

much easier to remember what he said as he stepped onto the moon's surface, rather than his actual name.

Another question asked us to list types of clouds and at least one lady listed four different cloud formations, but for others, delving back over six decades to school geography lessons put a lot of pressure on the memory and I could only remember one.

Congratulations to our member, Jane Lama, our wonderful SCUC Office Manager, who was the winner of the quiz and is not only very efficient, but also very knowledgeable! Many thanks to Sue for devising the questions and conducting the quiz, which stimulated plenty of chat and much laughter. After the quiz we then had afternoon tea and further discussion well into the afternoon.

We missed our wonderful secretary, Lencie Harding and do hope she will be able to join us all at our last meeting for the year, in November.

Uniting Christmas Cards

Thank you to the members of our congregation who paid \$372 for 31 packs of Christmas cards this year to support the work of Uniting. "Your purchase helps people in crisis this Christmas".

Kind regards, Lencie

SAMMY STAMP *Lencie Harding*

Thank you to Olwyn Syle, and Archivist Jenny Bars for their stamp donations. Special thanks to Archives' volunteer Anne Don, who kindly collects donations of stamps from members of the Murrumbidgee UC congregation to help fill my Sammy Stamp box.

Allan Clark was pleased to report that an article on the Sammy Stamp Ministry will appear in the December 2024 issue of *Crosslight*.

The following is from Allan Clark's report for the November 2024 issue of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship's magazine *Net Work*:

Recently, my wife Judy and I visited Chelsea to talk about Sammy Stamp's work to the Chelsea Uniting Church Mission and U.C.A.F. group where a pleasant time was had by all. We came home with stamps etc. for the Sammy Stamp volunteers to process the following Thursday. Up to the 5/10/2024 sales have reached about \$23,707 (same week last year \$27,364).

We have recently approved a \$4,000 grant to Noah's Ark Children's Home in South Africa to assist in giving orphaned, abused and abandoned children, physical, spiritual and emotional support. The home also provides an education for the children to help give them a future.

We have now approved \$34,900 in grants so far this year. All your generous donations of stamps, post cards and other bric-a-brac can now be forwarded to:-

SAMMY STAMP
C/- Ian and Margaret Beaumont,
Unit 64, Bert Newton Retirement Village,
4 Pioneer Walk, HIGHETT, VIC 3190.

Allan Clark, Convenor

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

BE INSPIRED!



SCUC COMMUNITY FORUM ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

November 17

The Forum Working Group members – Alan and Maria Sandbach, Iain Clarke, Joyce Jenkin, Kai Yuan, Margie Mitsikas and Alison Tokita – are working hard on publicity for the Forum through letterboxing, word of mouth, letters, and a real

estate board courtesy of Jellis Craig! Kai has been actively volunteering with the Avalon Centre, and many of us at the church have donated to Nedd's Uncomfortable Challenge. Alison thanks all those who donated and helped her reach her fund-raising goal.

This all prepares us spiritually for the very special occasion that the Forum will provide us and the community. We are also busy planning the smooth running of the event, including baking house-shaped biscuits for refreshments!

Please read again this article by Alan and Maria, first published last month.

Homelessness is a sensitive subject to which many of us respond with despair and discomfort. It is not the usual topic of choice for a Sunday afternoon discussion in Spring. However, the Church Council having decided to reinstitute community forums facilitated by the parish, we intend the inaugural SCUC Forum on Homelessness to encourage and inform participants, provide an opportunity to question and importantly to INSPIRE!

This free event will take place on **Sunday 17 November 2024** commencing at 3.00pm. All members of the congregation and friends are warmly invited, including those who may be homeless, together with a range of community participants. No RSVP is required.

We are looking forward to extending the use of our beautiful Church to "house" the Forum (please pardon the pun!). The event will include a "curated" afternoon tea and an opportunity for us all to meet new people with an interest in this important subject, chat and make connections.

Please consider sharing this invitation with your contacts in the wider local community. Leaflets can be obtained from the Church Office. We would be grateful if you would place them on the noticeboards (physical or virtual) of as many organisations as possible.

The SCUC website provides comprehensive information about the Forum and its impressive speakers: Debra Holmes and Noah Yang.

[Community Forum- Housing and Homelessness \(stonningtonchurch.org.au\)](https://stonningtonchurch.org.au)

We all recognise that homelessness is a complex multifaceted issue, with many causes and no one solution. There are some innovative dedicated services out there. Our Forum is about “joining the dots”, helping us develop a better understanding of how we can make a difference.

Let's not be overwhelmed or put the homelessness issue in the “too hard basket”, but rather take this exciting opportunity to play our part as individuals and as a congregation to assist in filling in the gaps.

Maria and Alan Sandbach

“Sleepout Rough for the Homeless” November 22

Cheryl Jenkins has shared this information about a project of the Rotary Club of Chadstone / East Malvern to support South Port Community Housing which houses vulnerable elderly people without any government support. Cheryl wrote:

Rotary got involved through Michele Kennedy who was last year's president of the Rotary club of Chadstone/East Malvern of which I am a member. Last year we had an old (or surplus to requirements) coats drive to pass on to them and also refurbished laptops which I dropped off to them. South Port is a suburb on the edge of the city and feels like a low socioeconomic area.

Michele started “Sleepout rough for the homeless” about three years ago and has raised quite a bit of money. People pay for the privilege of sleeping overnight in Central Park!

You can book via Trybooking: [Sleepout Rough for the Homeless Tickets, Central Park, Malvern East | TryBooking Australia](#)

Ed: I have booked! Anyone else joining me?

Early Carol Services at SCUC

November 23rd, 6.30pm

Our pianist Errol Fernando will lead the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, continuing

a tradition of his alma mater, Trinity College, Kandy, Sri Lanka. This tradition dates from 1946, and it has been carried on by old Trinitians in Melbourne for the past 25 years. The choir will include children and adults and they will sing in both English and Tamil. It was a delightful and joyous event last year, and highly recommended.

November 30th, 6.00pm

The next week, Vino Sathianathan who plays violin in our monthly ensemble will lead a similar carol service presented by the old girls of her Vembadi Girls High School in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Again, the carols will be in both English and Tamil. What a musical feast in the lead-up to Christmas.

Choral Forests

textures of nature, fabrics of voices

The Astra Choir conducted by John McCaughey with string quintet, Linda Kent, organ, Kim Bastin, keyboard, Michael Hewes, sound diffusion

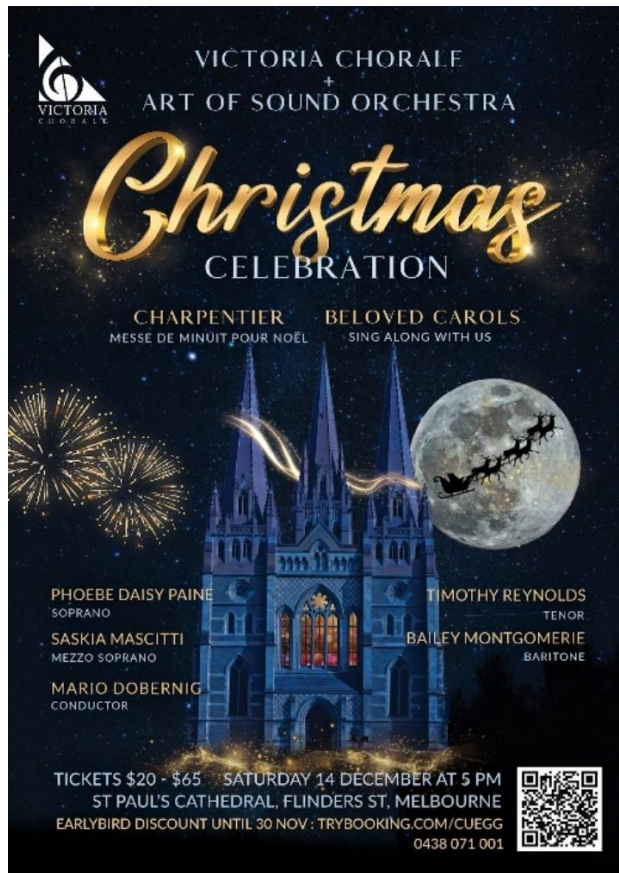
Sunday 8 December, 5:00 pm

St Mark's Anglican Church, 250 George St,
Fitzroy VIC 3065



Choral experiences of the elaborations of Nature and the stories of its internal spirits. The program explores densities of collective singing among imagery of

nature in Australian and Romanian compositions. With two new Australian works: Penelope Alexander, *Woodnaggerak*, human polyphony from transcription of birdsong; Martin Friedel, fragments from the unfinished *Arboreana* - choir with string ensemble and field recordings (internal sounds of trees and the radio signals they emit), with music of Tiberiu Olah, Pascal Bentoiu, Dan Dediu, Maia Ciobanu, Livia Teodorescu, Robert Schumann, Max Reger.



A CATCH-UP IN QUEENSCLIFF

Article from Maree Burnett

On Friday, 11th October 2024, Joyce Jenkin, Kerrie Davies and I set off for the oh so long journey to Queenscliff – not really! We set off just after 9.00am and were aiming to be in Queenscliff by 11.30am at the latest, with a refreshment stop on the way.

The traffic on the M1 was moving at a reasonable pace so we were making good time. Even the Westgate Bridge was flowing smoothly – not so much on the other side, heading in the opposite direction, though.

We had lots of interesting discussions along the way, covering when the construction would be complete, what the road would be like when finished and, of course, the marvelous, although

often unfathomable, installations being incorporated into the roadworks. For example, what do the large orange spikes reaching to the skies along one of the exit roads off the motorway represent? If you have ever been on East Link, the fake hotel is one example of these unfathomable roadside features.

The pale-coloured transparent fencing, which covers a significant section of the new works, is quite relaxing. However, we did decide that some of the brightly coloured (hot pink, anyone?) transparent fencing may not be appreciated if you actually lived beyond it.

As you exit all the construction work there are the never-ending developments along the way that soon will mean no open spaces between the City of Melbourne and Geelong. Speaking of Geelong, have you ever noticed that Geelong is a city of churches? We were struck by the tall spires of some, one of which was for sale, sad to say. On our return journey, we tried to guess the denomination of each based on the architecture, an interesting occupation.

We stopped at The Pavilion for a welcome coffee and convenience stop. One of us had not had breakfast – no telling tales, of course. We then determined that we had dressed inappropriately as it was so cold and windy on the bay.

The idea of stopping at this café had been to sit outside and marvel at the view of the bay but the gas fireplace inside was calling loudly! We probably stayed too long as we were a bit late arriving at our destination – sorry, Dana and Greg.

We finally made it to Queenscliff and, just so you know, if you ever head that way yourself, look for the old RED post box on the corner. It means you have arrived.



Greg told us that the post box is no longer in use but that all the tourists turn up to take photographs. Not wanting to be a 'tourist', this one was taken from the front garden. Hence, it is a side-on view and wouldn't make

the cut in a photographic competition. You can just see it poking its head above the shrub on the left at the end of the garden path.

After lots of hugs from Dana, Greg and Anouk, Dana gave us a tour of the garden.



As we expected, Dana has worked her magic as it was a painter's palette of colour of whites, pinks, mauves, reds and multiple shades of green. The weeping mulberry tree was a sight to behold.

It is in the background behind the chairs and is a real feature in that part of the garden. It will look amazing in a few weeks when the purple-pink fruit appears, so I hope someone sends us a photograph – hint Dana!

The weather had improved markedly in Queenscliff. The sun was shining, and it was warm and inviting out in the garden.



As you can see, Anouk was part of the family and as we walked around the garden, she was herding us like sheep, ensuring that we all stayed together, and no one strayed.

While there are no photographs of the side back garden, it is a similar size to the front garden shown in the pictures here. Within it there are trees: apple, bay and lemon and garden beds of flowers and vegetables. There is even a pond!

After our tour of the garden, Dana gave us a tour of the inside of the house. She also gave us a brief history of the house; telling us that it was built in the 1920s. A relative of the owner designed it and many of the features reflect his own interests. For instance, in most of the rooms, there are fireplaces and yet not one of them is the same as another – they are all unique. In some ways it does resemble the manse at Coppin Street, and it is just as welcoming.

There is a conservatory at the front leading out to the garden which you can see in the photograph. That room is claimed by Dana, and Greg has his study next to it with the bay windows overlooking the garden.



We had a lovely meal with homemade pizzas and salad, followed by some apple and rhubarb (from the garden) cake with cream, chocolate chip cookies and Greg's coffee. There was lots of conversation, catching up on news of children

and learning about Greg's ministry in Queenscliff and Pt Lonsdale.

Greg had to head out as he had some appointments to attend, so Dana and Anouk took us over to the church to explore the Op Shop and check out the facilities at the church. Kerrie took

a photograph of the pew seating, which looked very comfortable.



Then it was time to say farewell and head back before peak hour. It was a lovely day and we will be back. That is if Dana and Greg can cope with us again!

Maree Burnett, 12.10.2024

And Dorothy who is at the Noel Miller Centre turned 95 on October 22.



All well and cheerful!

Congratulations to the Grenness clan!

PERSONALS

Alasdair Grenness and daughter, October 10.
Great grand-daughter of Dorothy (and Ian) Grenness.



Alasdair, the recently qualified ENT surgeon, is the son of Malcolm and Susan Grenness (nee Phillips). Alasdair and his partner Brydie are having quite a year!

CONCERT REPORT: LIFT THE SPIRITS

October 27



This fund-raising concert was indeed uplifting. Alan Kogosowski performed Chopin and Liszt with his usual panache, and associate artists, soprano Elizabeth Finkel and Lily Tamir-Regev on clarinet shone in Schubert's "Shepherd on the Rock", evoking an encore. The near-capacity audience in the Church was fervent in their appreciation. Higgins Grandmothers for Refugees, spearheaded by Margie Mitsikas, thank SCUC for their support, and all who attended and donated, resulting in over \$6000.00 raised for the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project (BASP).



Website continues to amaze!

[Home | Stonnington Community Uniting Church \(stonningtonchurch.org.au\)](http://stonningtonchurch.org.au)

Do check out the recent additions: advert for organist; Cooking for a Cause; Inclusivity and the Performing Arts in Stonnington; Playing a Part in Kindergartens in Stonnington; and more. You will be amazed – and inspired by what we do in this community.

COMMON THREADS *Alison Tokita*

On October 24, we were surprised by a drop-in visit from the Church webmaster, Rosemary Grenness! She was enquiring about the provenance of the stained-glass window in the McKinnon Room, and also the pedal organ, which was most recently used regularly for Afternoon Fellowship when Grace McAllister used to play for the hymns. Rosemary gave us an informative impromptu tutorial on how Mr Google decides what information to pick up in response to search questions. The simple answer is: from a website which regularly gets updated, and provides useful information at first glance. The lesson for us is to regularly provide snippets of information – or extended articles – to Rosemary for posting. Common Threaders, let's rise to the challenge!



Rosemary made use of the occasion to photograph Dawn's cute fluffy toys, arranged on top of the rug of squares all knitted by Sue and joined up by Dawn; subsequently featured on the church's Facebook page! All have now gone to KOGO for distribution.



Next meeting: Thursday November 28, 10.00 to 12.00 in the Margaret McKinnon Room, and after that not till January 23rd.

MONTHLY CAFÉ CATCH-UP

Tuesday 12 November from 2 pm
Venue: Mr Sister Café, 81 Waverley Road

Our informal gathering over coffee on the second Tuesday of the month will again be at the **Mr Sister café**, on the corner of Douglas Street, very close to the church. This weirdly named café is a light and sunny venue, the coffee is good, and the service friendly. Please feel free to drop in for a chat and a catch-up. They are open till 3:30 pm.



All welcome, regardless of age, gender, dietary preferences etc.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for the many contributions in this issue. Please feel free to send me your news items and photos for *InSpire*. We also welcome letters and articles, so if you feel inspired, do write about any topic of interest to you to share with our readers. *Letters to the Editor are also welcome*. We can also promote your events at a modest or no fee!

Deadline for the **December 2024** edition of *InSpire* is **Monday, 25 November**. Articles should be emailed to the Editor, Alison Tokita, at alison.tokita@inspire.org.uk where possible, or they can be given in person.

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY FORUM



Designed by Freepik

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Sunday November 17, 3.00 to 5.00 pm

Stonnington Community Uniting Church

57 Burke Road (cnr Coppin Street), East Malvern

This Forum will challenge you to explore the interrelated issues of homelessness and housing by hearing from two inspiring people who have created organisations to provide services for the homeless. Their work ranges from distributing food and clothing, and extends to assisting with buying houses, and many things in between.

You will be encouraged to think outside the box about the complexities of the problems and the solutions, and to consider: What role can we play?

The speakers will welcome challenging questions and comments from all participants.

Participation in the Forum is FREE

Enquiries and further information

Stonnington Community Uniting Church

76 Coppin Street, MALVERN EAST, VIC 3145

tel: (03) 9571 4575

email: stonningtoncommunityuc@inet.net.au

web: stonningtonchurch.org.au

Refreshments will be provided

SPEAKERS

DEBORAH HOLMES

Director, Avalon Centre, 1936 Malvern Rd, Malvern East



Avalon
Centre

avaloncentre.org.au



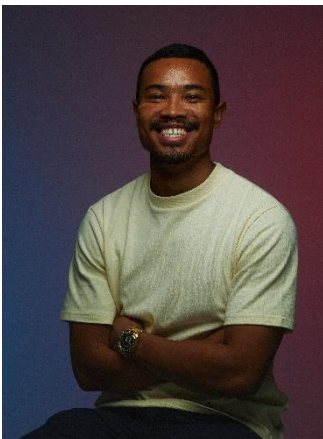
Deborah Holmes founded the Avalon Centre in 1987. "Our aim is to meet the unmet needs in society and help people who have slipped through the cracks. Avalon assists those who have been forgotten, overlooked and left behind. This includes the homeless, people with mental health and physical problems and disabilities, the elderly, refugees and anyone else who may benefit from our support. Avalon Services include *Homes for the Homeless*, *Avalon Drop-In*, and *Clothes & Bedding Distribution*, and individual support."

NOAH YANG

Founder and CEO of "We are Mobilise"



Wearemobilise.org.au



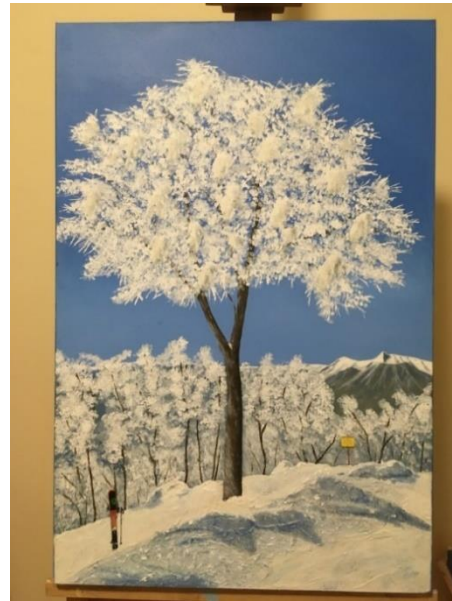
Noah founded the Mobilise movement challenged by the question "In a country as prosperous as Australia, why does anybody have to sleep on the street?". Since the first night he and a friend headed out with bags of bread to have conversations, Noah has led *We Are Mobilise* from a grassroots movement focused on assertive outreach through to an ACNC-registered national charity with operations in 5 states across Australia. Mobilise recently completed a \$2 million+ fundraising campaign with Nedd Brockmann, positioning it to launch some Australia-first direct giving programs - already having 100+ participants through these innovative programs.

CALENDAR NOVEMBER 2024

SUNDAY 3RD	11 AM	EUCCHARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH
SUNDAY 10TH	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE
TUESDAY 12TH	2.00 PM	CAFÉ CATCH UP AT MR SISTER CAFÉ 81 WAVERLEY RD
SUNDAY 17TH	10.30 AM 3.00 PM 5.00 AM	CHURCH SERVICE COMMUNITY FORUM ON HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT
MONDAY 18TH	2.00 PM	AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP
THURSDAY 21ST	10.30 AM	BOOK CHAT
SUNDAY 24TH	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE
THURSDAY 28TH	10.00 AM	COMMON THREADS

Answer: Douglas Connell: Victorian Alpine Area - Back Country behind Mt Bogong

And here are two more of Doug's evocative pictures



Victorian Alpine Area, Mt Bogong, Snow Gum Nozawa Onsen, Nagano Japan, near the summit.