



InSpire



NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 10, no 11

December 2024



The Forum on Housing and Homeless November 17

(see page 9)

InSpiring

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Hopefulness Wins over Despair!

Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Some say these are personality traits, shaped by nature and nurture. However, I think there is something even more fundamental than what comes to us from mum, dad, school and society and that is the way of life we choose.

There has been for centuries discussion and argument about "free will." The question always focuses on how much personal power we have to make changes in our lives. Let's go to the source of all knowledge, Google!!! The Britanica site puts it this way: *Free will, in humans, is the power to make decisions or perform actions independently of any prior event or state of the universe. Arguments for free will are based on the common assumption of individual moral responsibility, among other considerations.*

I am a free will believer. Because experience and observation in my 72 years has opened my eyes and my mind to the fact that people can and do change. It's not easy and it doesn't always happen. But when there is one fundamental ingredient it can. And that is HOPEFULLNESS!!

Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the confidence that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. And it can change my life to be more meaningful and purposeful.

One of the great quotes on hopefulness comes from Václav Havel who was a statesman, author, poet, playwright, and dissident. Havel served as the last president of Czechoslovakia and in 1993 became the first democratically elected president of the Czech Republic after the fall of communism. He wrote:

I am not an optimist, because I am not sure that everything ends well. Nor am I a pessimist,

because I am not sure that everything ends badly. I just carry hope in my heart. Hope is the feeling that life and work have a meaning. You either have it or you don't, regardless of the state of the world that surrounds you. Life without hope is an empty, boring, and useless life. I cannot imagine that I could strive for something if I did not carry hope in me. I am thankful to God for this gift. It is as big as life itself.

May your life choices reflect your hopes, not your fears, past events nor your inherited DNA.

Here are a few other wise quotes that can inform our daily lives. Helen Keller: *Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible. Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of suffering.*

Hope calls for courage. We can be fearful or angry at the way things are; But hopefulness brings a peculiar form of gratitude, thankfulness even beauty and creativity into our lives.

Emily's Dickinson's wonderful poem, "Hope" Here, quoted it in full:

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -*

*And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -*

*I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.*

But hopefulness is fragile. In the film "Scent of a Woman" the Al Pacino character says, "...there is nothing like the sight of an amputated spirit.

There's no prosthetic for that." Hopes can be easily dashed.

To return to Václav Havel's words, hope is the feeling that life and work have a meaning. We can search for the meaning of life; turn over every stone. Or we can choose to be hopeful and embrace meaning and purpose when and wherever we see it. Some say, "You can be whatever you want to be..." No, you can't! Hope is not wishful thinking. Nor is it blind faith. It requires reflection, intuition and reasonableness.

St Paul's words: *Hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation and continue steadfastly in prayer.* That's more realist. We are surrounded by goodness, beauty, and love and as a statement of faith, it is hope that enables us to see it, feel it, and live into it. The Catholic activist Dorothy Day experienced it like this:

When Dorothy Day, an atheist and communist at the time, became pregnant she was so overcome by the beauty of bearing a new living being inside her that she converted to Christianity. Why? "Because I had to give thanks to someone," she said. God is the One to whom we render our Thanks.

I think resilience comes from hopefulness and hope is nurtured by our willingness to change. Many have misused Charles Darwin's use of the concept of survival of the fittest. More accurate are his words... *It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.*

OK, to conclude. There is no denying that there is pain, suffering, hopelessness and despair in our world and in ourselves. We see pain and tragedy around us every day. It can be awful when it touches our own lives.

We can't ignore the powers that are beyond our own ability to control or even endure. Honesty and realism demand that we recognize that. But I don't want to wake each morning with that despair weighing on me. I want to be hopeful and that means I need to cultivate the ability to be flexible, adaptable, coherent, energetic, enthusiastic and reflective.

And help is there. Again, the words of St Paul: *my blessing for you is that the God of hope will fill you with joy and peace and that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

It's all about being able to overcome the unexpected. To thrive and flourish. In times of uncertainty. And not to live a life haunted by the past and daunted by the future. That wise and wonderful woman Helen Keller hits it on the head when she writes: *When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.*

So, hopefulness is the courage and resilience to see a new reality, even if it is not what the voices around you imagined for you. Or even what we imagined you should have or be. Hope is not wishful thinking. It is the conviction that even when faced with disappointment or despair or death nor anything in our lives, we are more than conquerors through God/Jesus/love/the divine/the sacred or even life itself. Because we have nurtured hope deep within ourself. (Romans 8:31-39)

Christopher

JNC SEARCH FOR NEW MINISTER

There has been no material progress in our search for a new minister since last month's report. No further candidates have been advanced by Synod Placements Committee to the Joint Nominating Committee for a conversation.

Expanding the scope of our advertising campaign and using personal interstate and NZ contacts with the aim of generating interest in our Placement is in progress.

Dick Carter

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT *Joyce Jenkin*

The installation of the fountain is complete and Alan has received a number of donations toward the cost but is happy to accept more.

We are endeavouring to seek a part-time director of music from 2025 due to the retirement of Cheryl and Colin. The Ensemble has indicated that they would be available to play on 3rd Sunday as well as 1st if required.

The choirs that use our premises regularly will definitely participate in the Carols by Candlelight service on 22nd December.

It is probable that we will be joining with some of the other local uniting churches in January as we have in the past. More information will be available about this as soon as possible.

Council expressed thanks to all members of the Working Group for all the work that they put into the forum on homelessness: there was a reasonable crowd which was very engaged, meaningful questions were asked and a considerable amount of money was raised for both The Avalon Centre and We are Mobilise. Consideration is now being given to holding further forums next year.

MEMORIAL GARDEN Water Feature Project



Readers of "Inspire" will recall that following the passing of Jim Fyvie his family kindly donated money to the church with the indication that they hoped that it may be used towards installing a water feature in or near the Memorial Garden.

The water feature was installed in October and has operated from time to time in between the carrying out of the plumbing and electrical works required to move from temporary to permanent installation. Once these are completed, we will arrange suitable landscaping to enhance the appearance of the surrounding garden area.

The Church Council is most grateful to everyone who has kindly contributed to our appeal for funds towards the full cost of the installation. The total amount raised to date is \$2,340. We are not far from our target of \$3,000!

We commend this appeal for your prayerful consideration in the hope that we may reach our target before the year is out.

Alan Sandbach

for the Church Council

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT

Lorna Henry

After a wonderfully inspiring meeting in October listening to our collection of poems and reading to cheer and encourage, we met in November under different circumstances to consider the lives of the homeless and to meet those who were doing something practical to help.

On Sunday afternoon, November 17th, the Forum on Homelessness was held at SCUC, a very well attended, informative and challenging meeting around a key issue of our society, and with two excellent speakers.

Something for the Spirit's meeting was a follow-on to the forum, ours a less formal and smaller meeting, one in which we had the opportunity to talk around the table with one of the speakers, Debbie Holmes from the Avalon Centre. We gained a personal, 'behind the scenes' look at providing homes for a varied group of people, most deeply grateful with lives transformed, others less certain and some not showing understanding of its intent, or not being able to participate. Debbie spoke of wisdom gained from experience in setting standards and having the professional help needed to provide homes in a financially sustainable way. There was so much more too.

This conversation was a privilege for us all.

We also were able to raise a glass to our Something for the Spirit at the end of our twentieth year of meeting!

That's it for 2024, and we will meet next in February.

Warmest thanks to all who have taken part this year in our discussions and explorations of many topics. Thank you for your ideas, enthusiasm, participation, contributions. Thank you too for your honesty and understanding that we may differ in opinions but never in our care for each other.

Happy Christmas time! And Happy New Year!

LIBRARY NEWS

Faye Pattinson

As usual everyone was enthusiastic and a wide diversity of genres were shared. We were so pleased to have Libby joins us bringing a very thought-provoking book "Prima Facie" by Suzie Miller.



And I was of course delighted to have my grandson James with me!



Here are the books that people brought to the table.

Lorna: "A Nice Quiet Tourist" by Verity Fitzhardinge. Afghanistan in 1966 was a stable, independent and developing country. The letters published here record an extraordinary journey through that country by an unlikely traveller, a

middle-aged woman from Canberra who was engaged in research on nineteenth century British–Russian–Afghan history. On a six-month field trip, Verity Fitzhardinge spent some time working in Indian and Russian libraries, but as the major part of the trip she spent several months in Afghanistan, during which she travelled widely and adventurously through the country.

Joyce: “Sons of the Southern Cross” by Grantlee Kieza. Tells the story of the flag through the stories of the people who fought under it, the miners, the soldiers, the bushrangers, the journalists and politicians, who shaped Australia. He takes readers from the slums of Ireland to the goldfields of Victoria, and then on to the courtrooms, pubs and hideouts where revolutions were hatched. through the raw and impassioned characters trying to make a life in a new nation, he brings Australia's renegade history vividly to life.

Sue: “44 Scotland Street” by Alexander McCall Smith. The residents and neighbours of 44 Scotland Street and the city of Edinburgh come to vivid life in these gently satirical, wonderfully perceptive serial novels, featuring six-year-old Bertie, a remarkably precocious boy--just ask his mother.

Cheryl: 1) “Faraday” by Robyn Howarth. In 1972, the unthinkable happened, a heinous event occurred and was coined as the crime of the century, known as the Faraday kidnapping. Two masked men burst into the school room on Friday 6th October 1972 and kidnapped the young female teacher and 6 female students, the author, Robyn Howarth, being one of those students. This wicked act brought the Faraday community to its knees and thrust into the national spotlight in an insidious way.

2) “Hope” by Niall Harbison. Niall Harbison is a dog hero based in Thailand. He spends his days feeding, caring for and rescuing the many street dogs he comes across. Originally from Dublin, Niall was the owner of a successful advertising

company. After selling it, he moved to Thailand where his addictions – drugs and alcohol –



almost got the better of him. One day he woke up in hospital, close to death, and realised that something had to change. And that was what spurred him on to start saving and helping street dogs. His aim is to help 10,000 street dogs.

Jo: “The Radio Hour” by Victoria Purman. Martha Berry is fifty years old, a spinster, and one of an army of polite and invisible women in 1956 Sydney who go to work each day and get things done without fuss, fanfare or reward.

Working at the country's national broadcaster, she's seen highly praised talent come and go over the years but when she is sent to work as a secretary on a brand-new radio serial, created to follow in the footsteps of Australia's longest running show, Blue Hills, she finds herself at the mercy of an egotistical and erratic young producer without a clue, a conservative broadcaster frightened by the word 'pregnant' and a motley cast of actors with ideas of their own about their roles in the show.

Libby: “Prima Facie: by Suzie Miller. A propulsive, raw look at the price victims pay for speaking out and the system that sets them up to fail. Tessa is a thoroughbred. A young, brilliant barrister. Her masterful line of questioning in the courtroom has netted Tessa win after win, freeing men accused of rape and sexual assault. As controversial as it is, this is her job - it's just about the facts and who can game the system. One sickening night, though, she makes a choice and

finds herself in a position countless women - one in three - have before her. And she's faced with a gut-wrenching, life-changing decision: will she take the stand to testify about her rape, with the full awareness that the system has not been built to protect her?

Faye: Table for Two by Amor Towles. six stories based in New York City and a novella set in Golden Age Hollywood. The New York stories, most of which take place around the year 2000, consider the fateful consequences that can spring from brief encounters and the delicate mechanics of compromise that operate at the heart of modern marriages.

Our next Book Chat will be on the third Thursday 20th of February.

AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Lencie Harding

The final Opportunity Table for the year will be held on Sunday 8th December to follow worship.

Donations of goods will be gratefully accepted.

To comply with health regulations, please label all homemade goods with the name of the item, ingredients, date made and name of the cook.

Afternoon Fellowship didn't meet in November as several of the members were unable to attend.

SAMMY STAMP Lencie Harding

Thank you to the members of our congregation who have kindly saved any stamps received for Sammy Stamp. The volunteers are always very grateful for the support they receive and I'm always very pleased when my Sammy Stamp box receives regular additions

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

As you read this report, the Christmas season is upon us, but never mind, Sammy Stamp's helpers have been hard at it, snipping, sorting and selling stamps, coins and other bric-a-brac to raise funds to support many worthy causes.

These days a large portion of funds raised is per the internet.

Up to and including the 1st of November, sales have reached about \$28,851 (same week last year \$31,927.)

No further grants have been approved since the last report so the total approved so far this year remains at \$34,900.

You may remember, in last month's report we approved a \$4,000 grant to Noah's Ark Children's Home in South Africa.

Here follows a letter of appreciation to show how the monies raised from all the stamps etc, kindly donated to Sammy Stamp, can be used.

We are so pleased to inform you that we have received the funds from your Church and we are so grateful. We will use some of the funds you have sent us to acquire a white board for one of the classrooms, we will also buy stationery for January 2025 for all the children as well as school uniforms. Because of the quantities we need for all our children, these have to be ordered in October/November. We are now busy with quotations so we can finalise our order.

We are so grateful for your support and for the blessing that your Church is to our children.

*Many Blessings
Warm regards
Sylvie Delsouiller - Project Manager*

GRANTS MADE BY the UCAF FUND 'SAMMY STAMP' 2024

Travellers Aid Australia (To purchase six wheelchairs) \$4,900

Vurango Health Care Centre (Solomon Islands)
(To complete a building for their medical nurse)
\$5000

Vanuatu Prevention of Blindness \$2000

Mission Liaison Group (MLG) (Toward cost of
transporting goods to our Pacific Island Church
partners) \$5000

Uniting VicTas Winter Share Appeal \$5000

Frontier Services (Supporting the Bush
Chaplains) \$5000

Kondanani Children's Village, Zambia (Provision
of food and exercise books) \$4000

Noah's Ark Children's Home, South Africa (To
assist with expenses) \$4000

Hope in a Suitcase Australia (To provide a
suitcase of new items for children entering care)
\$5000

TOTAL TO DATE: \$39,900

Allan Clark, Convenor

Letter from Prahran Mission

Joyce:

Here at Prahran, we run Hartley's Meals, providing breakfast Monday-Friday, due to finish up in November due to funding restraints and lunch, Mon- Fri which is ongoing, and reliant on donations to continue running this program. We have limited funding to provide a mental health duty worker in this space to support consumers with their presenting needs.

Our emergency relief program provides much needed material aid for people presenting at a time of crisis. This program is facilitated by support workers who can use this engagement to

identify other needs and make referrals as appropriate.

We rely heavily on volunteers and donations to run these services. Any support you are willing to provide would be much appreciated.

We are working towards an initiative of implementing a coffee cart at the front of the site, to provide barista made coffee at an affordable price, with a pay it forward option. We feel this would be a great way to generate funding and to engage the broader community and bridge the gap that exists.

Our mission is to provide a welcoming space for people experiencing disadvantage or crisis, where they can enjoy a hot meal, or receive material aid, while engaging with supportive staff to assist them with a range of needs.

Over the Christmas period, we offer a toy shop for families and Christmas day lunch for consumers, as well as Christmas hampers so that people can enjoy a Christmas feast at home.

NO SHORTAGE OF APPRECIATION

A Visit to ASRC with donated goods

The large Franco Cozzo mural welcomes us to the ever more diverse community of Footscray. A left turn takes us past the market and station and a further left at Albert Street's Bird mural leads us to the roller door delivery entrance of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC).

A phone call to the office and the roller door rises allowing the car to back in. A smiling volunteer wheels a large trolley up to the car and helps to unload the donations.

The goods delivered are going to people who really need them. We've been told food donations rarely have time to hit the shelves. So many of the ASRC clients are solely dependent on the

generosity of others and the help they receive from the ASRC.

“Anything you need or are short of?” we ask. “Everything,” we’re told.

The appreciation for the donated goods is genuine and sincere. We hear the words thank you several times before we leave.

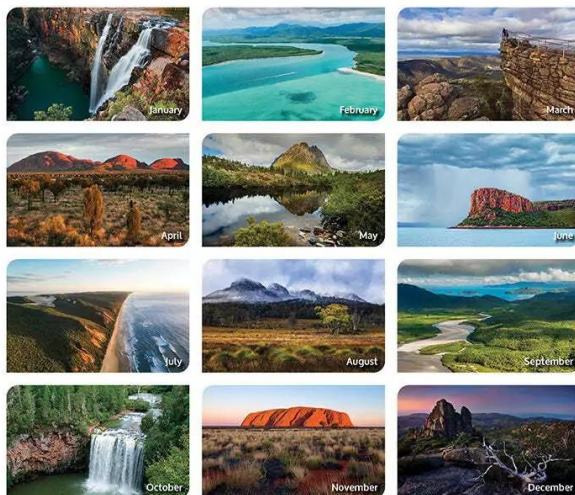
Once a fortnight the pew sheet notices include a list of needed items that will be gratefully received.

Lencie Harding

Gift for Herro Zhao

A beautiful 'Majestic Australia' 2025 Calendar by Artique has been posted to our friend Herro in China as a Christmas/Chinese New Year gift. The calendar is designed and printed in Australia and supports the local and national photographers whose stunning photographs are featured.

2025 | MAJESTIC *Australia*



WE WERE INSPIRED!



SCUC COMMUNITY FORUM ON HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

November 17

Nearly 70 people gathered to ponder the issue of homelessness and hear our two speakers who are very active in that space. Alan Sandbach as chair gave a succinct and lucid overview of homelessness in our society and then introduced the speakers.



Debbie Holmes spoke passionately about the Avalon Centre in Malvern Road that she founded in 1987. It evolved over the 37 years to its present level of activity. The Avalon motto is “help when we can, where we can and in whatever way we can”. Two arms of activity: distribution of clothing

and other essential goods to various points including the CBD. St Kilda, Dandenong, in collaboration with other organisations. It is worth noting that Kai Yuan volunteers in this activity three times a week!

Another slogan is: Not handouts but a hand up. This is the philosophy behind providing housing for needy people, the second arm of Avalon's activity, Avalon Homes for the Homeless. Thanks to amazing individual donors and granting bodies, ten houses have been made available for a social rent. Debbie's ambition is to increase that to 300 houses!

Noah Yang followed with an animated talk about his organization, We are Mobilise. His sponsor is the runner, Nedd Brockmann, whose run from Perth to Sydney in 2022 raised two million dollars for Mobilise. In October this year Nedd and Noah launched another ambitious project to raise ten million dollars for Mobilise that involved encouraging people to create challenges for sponsorship. The funding goes principally to direct grants to homeless people to help them find safe accommodation and reestablish their lives.



Both speakers showed videos showcasing their work and the appreciation of many people they have helped.

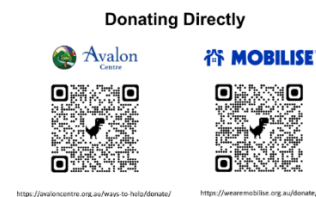
Afternoon tea time followed the speakers' presentations, and proved to be a time of informal discussion when people could get to know each other and learn about individual interests in homelessness matters.

The Q&A session was lively and informative showing the shared agendas of Avalon and Mobilise while also highlighting how each was distinctive. To quote Lorna: "I found the atmosphere warm and inviting and there was a spirit of genuine interest and wanting to do something to help."

In response to the talks, substantial donations were received on the day, and it is expected that others will donate using the information provided. If you would like to contribute, please use the following QR codes or the following websites of each organisation.

<https://avaloncentre.org.au/ways-to-help/donate/>

<https://wearemobilise.org.au/donate/>



For good measure, Alan picked up one of the Avalon Centre buses and parked it outside the church to herald the presence of Debbie Holmes. This was Kai's brilliant suggestion!



Thank you to the two speakers who volunteered their time and energy to bring us up to speed about what is being done and what can be done about homelessness.

And thank to the tireless working group who curated the event: Alan and Maria, Margie, Joyce,

Iain Clarke and Kai. We were very pleased with how everything went and with the dynamic atmosphere throughout. Scones were a real treat, and the house-shaped biscuits not only tasted great, but were part of the message, thanks to Maria and Joyce.

A special thanks to Kai for his contribution to the planning and running of the Forum. He solved all our many technical problems as they arose, and made pertinent and sensible suggestions. His involvement started when he was called in an emergency to help set up a zoom meeting in July. At that meeting, he met Debbie Holmes, after which he started volunteering for Avalon three times a week and more, at the Avalon Centre and with the distribution of clothing, bedding, shoes, toiletries, and backpacks at the various points. Kai became the organic link with Debbie and Avalon by volunteering so intensively there.

This schedule will give you an idea of the extent of the grass roots outreach of Avalon that Kai has been assisting with.

If you missed the Forum you will be able to listen to a recording made and edited by Kai, which will be posted on our website shortly.

Alison Tokita

TEARFUND

SCUC has, for over 20 years now, been a wonderfully generous supporter of TEARFUND. I'm sure no further introduction to it is needed, but in case someone is reading about it for the first time, let it be said:

TEARFUND is a Christian organisation, decades old, which has been fundraising and providing assistance and opportunities to people in some of the world's poorest nations. Some of our own indigenous communities are included.

TEAR stands for Transformation, Empowerment, Advocacy and Relief.

Areas in which help is given are health and hygiene, sanitation, clean water supply, education opportunities and the training of teachers, small business development, farming and food efficiency, including the purchase of chickens and goats. Advocacy training empowers small communities.

TEARFUND works in order to bring to reality Jesus' statement: 'I have come that they may have life and have it more fully'.

Here at SCUC each Advent season is the time to buy 'Useful Gifts' in the form of cards from the above areas of help. We also make a donation to TEARFUND from the whole parish, hoping always to raise enough to provide a village with a well.

The TEARFUND Stall in the Hall will be there each Sunday of Advent (4 Sundays in December), and you are warmly invited to participate, either by buying 'gifts/cards' for Christmas, or by making a donation.

Thank you in anticipation!



Clothing distribution info July to Dec 2024

Avalon's Moving Wardrobe and Moving Heart van and bus will go to the following locations to distribute clothing, bedding, shoes, toiletries, and backpacks.

Wednesdays Fortnightly

6.15 pm: The Salvation Army Project 614 Westwood Place	Jul 3, 17, 31	Aug 14, 28	Sept 11, 25
7.15 pm: Federation Square.	Oct 9, 23	Nov 6, 20	Dec 4, 18

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Sundays Fortnightly

5.30 pm: The Peanut Farm Reserve St Kilda.	Jul 7, 21	Aug 4, 18	Sept 1, 15, 29
6.15 pm: Queen Victoria Market.	Oct 13, 27	Nov 10, 24	Dec 8, 22

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First Fri of the month 2024: Jul 5th, Aug 2nd, Sep 6th; Oct 4th; Nov 1st; Dec 6th

10am -10.45am *St Mary's House of Welcome* 165/169 Brunswick St, Fitzroy
11.45 am - 12.45pm *St Peter and Pauls* 377 Dorcas St, South Melbourne

Second Fri of the month 2024: Jul 12th; Sept 13th; Oct 11th; Nov 8th; Dec 13th
1.30-12pm *Cornerstone* 1/31 James St, Dandenong

Third Friday every 2nd month 2024: Aug 16th; Oct 18th; Dec 20th
11-12pm, *St. Mark's Community Centre*, 250 Gerge St, Fitzroy

Fourth Thurs of the month 2024: Jul 25th; Aug 22nd; Sept 26th; Oct 24th; Nov 28th; Dec 19th
5.30 - 6.45pm, *Christ Church*, 14th Acland St, St.Kilda

Mondays and Thursdays 9.30am - 3.30pm
Clothing, bedding, shoes, toiletries, and food available at **Avalon Centre**, 1936 Malvern Road, East Malvern. *Everyone welcome.*

(Public Transport: No.3 Tram, 612 Bus. East Malvern Station on Glen Waverley line)



1936 Malvern Rd, East Malvern, 3145. Tel: 9569-2240 Fax: 9569-2239 www.AvalonCentre.org.au info@avaloncentre.org.au
ABN: 54589625215 No: A0025017F

CAROL SERVICES AT SCUC

On November 23rd, our pianist Errol Fernando again led 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 contributed songs in Sinhalese and Tamil as well as English, a gesture of multicultural harmony. It was indeed a delightful and joyous event.

On November 30th Vino Sathianathan 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.

These two choirs will also contribute to our own Candlelight Carol Service on 22 December! What a musical feast in the lead-up to Christmas.

CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICE



Our own Annual Christmas Carol Service will be held on Sunday December 22, 2024, 7.00 pm

This year we will be joined by choral groups who are regular users of our church: The People's Choir, the Japanese Ladies Choir, Vino Sathianathan's Vembadi old girls choir, and Errol Fernando's Trinity old boys choir. Some contributions will be in different languages but with familiar tunes. Do encourage your family and friends to come and enjoy singing and listening to carols, and hearing the familiar Christmas story

in words and music. All will be treated to Christmas cheer after the service!

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. (Alison's gig)

Sunday 8 December, 5:00 pm

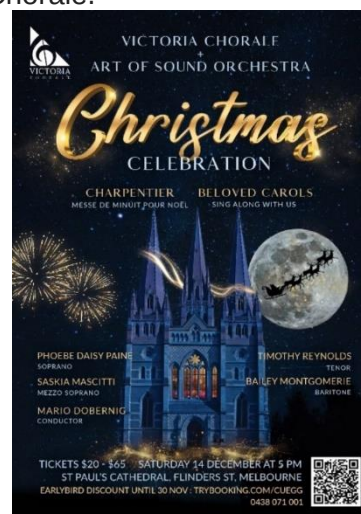
St Mark's Anglican Church, 250 George St,
Fitzroy VIC 3065



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.

Here is Anne Page's Christmas concert with the Victoria Choral.



Website continues to amaze!

I urge you to go through the photo gallery on the web page announcing our search for a new minister:

[Church Minister Vacancy | Church in Stonnington](#)

It is like looking at ourselves in a mirror and being amazed at how good we look.

Thank you, Rosemary!

COMMON THREADS

Alison Tokita

The last meeting for 2024 was held on Thursday November 28.

One of our newer members, Jackie Tizora, originally from Zimbabwe, was married on November 9, and five of us were privileged to attend the nuptial mass for her wedding at St Aloysius in Balaclava Road, a huge cathedral-like church. The whole service lasted nearly two hours, and the whole atmosphere was amazing: the Latin liturgy, the incense, and the music! A small group of singers performed the mass setting by Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), in gorgeous polyphony that resonated throughout the building. It was a real feast for the senses.



Jackie is completing a PhD at Leiden University and expects to settle in Melbourne with her husband. We hope to see more of her next year.



Our first meeting for 2025 will be on January 23rd, 10.00 to 12.00 in the Margaret McKinnon Room, followed by lunch.

MONTHLY CAFÉ CATCH-UP

Tuesday 10 December from 2 pm
Venue: Mr Sister Café, 81 Waverley Road

Our last catch-up over coffee this year will 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.

We will meet next in the New Year, Tuesday 14 January. All welcome, regardless of age, gender, dietary preferences etc.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Alison,

Thank you for an interesting and very varied InSpire for November. I noted your reference to Rosemary's question about the pedal organ in the Margaret McKinnon Room and I know that it was certainly in the Chapel, in the Ewing Sunday School buildings, which I think were built in the

1930's, on the eastern side of Burke Road. When I was in the Junior and later, Senior PFA (the mid 1950's) we used to worship in the Chapel and I remember a girl who was in my older sister's group regularly accompanied us during the hymns. I think I may have played it myself, on very rare occasions! I was no great pianist.

Once a new, smaller hall, kitchen, internal toilets, offices and meeting rooms were built on the property alongside the Ewing Church, (the early 1980's) the old Sunday School buildings were hired out to outside groups and the pedal organ eventually found a home in the new meeting room. The room was named after Margaret McKinnon, sometime after her death. I know that the pedal organ was used by the Evening and later, Afternoon Fellowship, and was played by Helen Martin, who was a wonderful pianist and a very loyal Fellowship member, for many years. In more recent times, following the amalgamation of the congregation from Serrell Street with the Ewing congregation, the greatly admired Marlene Butterley also accompanied our singing at Fellowship meetings.

I agree with your comments about compiling a history of more recent times at Ewing, but feel it would be a huge undertaking!

Kind regards,
Jan Riches

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Erratum

In last month's issue, in the report on the September 29 Café Church, the poem **God Consciousness**, one of four poems by Denham Grierson that we were invited to listen to and discuss in groups mistakenly opened with the line:

How did God conscientiousness come to you?
It should have read:

How did God **consciousness** 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....

My apologies!

Thank you for the many contributions in this issue and throughout the year. Please keep sending 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 no fee! Well, that's it for this year. Wishing all a joyous Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Deadline for the **February 2025** edition of *InSpire* is **Monday, 27 January**. Articles should be emailed to the Editor, Alison Tokita, at [REDACTED] where possible, or they can be given in person.

For this month's aesthetic appreciation, Eric Lama's bonsai, being admired by members of the Japanese Ladies Choir, Yukari Echo. Who knew that Jane's husband was a Japan expert?!



CALENDAR DECEMBER 2024

SUNDAY 1ST	11 AM	EUCARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH
SUNDAY 8TH	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE
TUESDAY 10TH	2.00 PM	CAFÉ CATCH UP AT MR SISTER CAFÉ 81 WAVERLEY RD
SUNDAY 15TH	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE
SUNDAY 22ND	10.30 AM 7.00 PM	CHURCH SERVICE CANDLELIGHT CAROL SERVICE
WEDNESDAY 24TH	9.00AM	CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

CHURCH SERVICES IN JANUARY 2025

Sunday 19th January at 10.30 am

Sunday 26th January at 10.30am

