

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

April 2023

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Welcome to our April edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

In this issue Rev Bret Myers discusses the question ‘How could someone so good (Jesus) be treated so inhumanely?’ and Andrew Hamilton looks at ‘Easter as an enduring story of loss and hope’.

Chris Ayles seeks your advice on the front garden and you will also find contributions from Rev David Purling and Fellowship.

Thanks to those who completed our survey – the results will be in the May Vision. The cut-off date for this will be **28th April 2023**. Either drop a copy in to Nicole at the office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or snout-n-about@bigpond.com

Good Friday message:

“Why was Jesus tortured to death?”

Have you ever wondered what Jesus did to deserve being tortured and crucified to death? How could someone so good be treated so inhumanely? Some answer this in purely theological terms – but do you not wonder the real reasons why people despised him enough to torture and crucify him? Even if we haven’t thought about this latter question, it actually gives insight to the theological answer as well.

According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus died because he was perceived as a threat to the value system of the Roman Empire and the Jewish religious hierarchy. They considered him to be an insurrectionist, one who wanted to overthrow the system as it then was.



According to the gospel writers one of his key missions was to create an egalitarian world that lived in accordance with God’s values that he taught. Jesus believed that living by these values (God’s values, not Caesar’s) would transform the entire world.

It was subversive because everyone would be counted and treated as equal in worth – not only spiritually, but also politically and economically. Non-Romans and foreigners would be given the same benefits as citizens. Based on his teachings, there should be universal equity in the distribution of resources and the same rights for everyone, including non-citizens. Everyone has enough to live on and flourish, but no one has far more than enough. Likewise, we are all siblings under God who is parent to us all. We are not to overcome our enemies with the use of force, but with the force of love.

Justice was to be for everyone, and it was to be impartial. This is what “love one another as you love yourself” meant in real terms. And it was not just for individuals, it was entire nations; indeed, the entirety of humanity.

The problem with it however, is that it had never been tried. And some would suggest it has never been tried. Every empire has rejected such a radical idea, and has instead preferred inequality with advantage for the wealthy and powerful, at the disadvantage of the poor and weak. This is how domination cultures work – it is the way it has always been.

The fact that some were calling Jesus ‘the Messiah’ – *the one who would bring about a world founded on peace with justice, and love between all peoples* – further alarmed those in power.

The Jewish religious authorities were the first to recognize this. They also thought that he was giving the people false hope. It was at their bidding that Pontius Pilate allowed Jesus to be crucified.

In contrast to domination culture, Christians believe that God’s ‘values’ are epitomized by God’s unconditional love for humanity and creation. We are created to be good – but with the potential to choose evil because God respected us enough to affirm our freedom of will. Moreover, it is down to us to be responsible for our own actions – with the exception being the systemic injustices of society, which we may help to create, be complicit in, participate in, or oppose.

Simply put, Jesus was tortured to death because of his refusal to accept ‘Caesar’s values’ over ‘God’s values’. Like those who went before him and those have come after him – all who speak truth to power – he was a threat. He had to be crucified because he spoke out against society’s sin of inequality, which gave an advantage to the wealthy and powerful, at the disadvantage of the poor and weak.

So, the authorities did to him what they do to all who try to change or create a new system. They mocked, ridiculed, berated, persecuted, tortured, and finally murdered him. This is what domination culture has always done to those who call its values into question. And that is why he believed that his own death was not the final statement. He believed in a reality called resurrection that will outlive the cruelties and evils of domination cultures. Is that what you believe?

On ‘Good Friday,’ is our ‘take-home message’ that Jesus tried nonviolence, love, peace, and justice and failed? Or that we, his followers, still have something to say about an ‘egalitarian world that lives in accordance with the values he taught,’ despite the injustice and cruelty of his death?

Adapted from a post by Rev Bret Myers on Progressive Christianity. The Rev. Bret Myers is a United Church of Christ minister. He was ordained in the United Methodist Church, and has standing in both churches.

Lunch with the Dawoodi Bohra Community

Following on from our “Spring into Action” project, we will be providing you with an opportunity to greet and get to know our friends from the Dawoodi Bohra community in the hall on Sunday 23rd April.

Starting at 11.30am, there will be a time of introductions and sharing news and information about who we are as two communities of faith.

Sunday 23rd is the first Sunday after Eid al-Fitr, which is the celebration at the end of Ramadan, one of the holiest months in the Islamic calendar. We will learn more about Ramadan and other special celebrations marked by Muslims.



Lunch will be buffet style and you will be invited to share your meal with members of the Dawoodi Bohra Community. There will be a selection of foods provided by both communities and Zulfikar (from DBs) assures us that he has asked their food preparers to go light on the spices! A range of drinks will also be available including tea, chai (Indian style), and various Indian drinks including one based on milk. Lunch will end with sweets and a fruit platter.

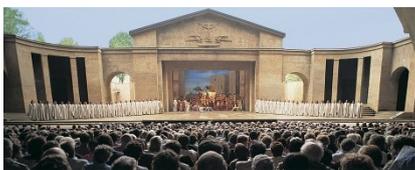
This will be a wonderful opportunity for members of both communities to meet together and share food and stories, and learn about each other’s faith. **Please put the date in your diary and register your interest in attending by contacting the office.** Numbers will be limited so bookings are essential. Children and grandchildren are very welcome as the DBs are a young community and their children will be participating.

Regular tea and coffee will be served between 10.30 - 11.00am, but we will need to clear the hall by 11.00am.

Fellowship News

From Margaret Clogg

At our March meeting, Janet Woodward (Secretary of UCFellowship and Mission Support) spoke to us about the possibilities of changing from our present structured meeting format to a much less structured “Friendship Group”. It was a very worthwhile discussion and we were given many possibilities to think about and discuss at the April meeting.



Bev Tredrea will speak to us at the April 13th meeting about her experiences when she visited Oberammergau.

If you would like to stay for lunch after the meeting, please bring your sandwich with you. Tea and coffee is provided.

Every-one is welcome to join us.

A change in practice for calling for nominations

From the Chairperson

Every organisation needs appropriate governance support. Morialta UC is no different. Our Church Council, Congregation Leaders and Presbytery Representatives all perform an important function.

As the Annual General Meeting approaches and elections for leadership positions are planned, members of the congregation are asked to begin the discerning process that will identify members with the gifts and graces to undertake leadership responsibilities.

This year Morialta UC is going to try something a little different.

Previously, the nomination process required those being nominated to sign before the nomination form was submitted.

This time, members of the congregation are asked to identify those from our number who have the skills to undertake leadership within our community. You do not need to seek permission from those who you nominate and it is entirely appropriate for you to self-nominate if you feel you have the skills and ability to undertake the role.

Once nominations are received those named will be approached, and it is hoped, will accept nomination.

If you have any questions, please seek clarification from our present leaders.

Nomination forms are available in the foyer.

Early Mother’s Day Devonshire Tea with Emma Knights @ Morialta

Sunday 7th May – 2.00 to 4.00pm



Emma is a well-known Adelaide artist, with Honours in Popular Music and an Advanced Diploma in Classical Piano Performance. Her debut album, *Anticipate*, was released in December 2020. Emma’s music has been described as spirit music, contemporary art song, reflective and theatrical pop, where the piano accompaniments and lyrics tell the story equally.

Emma will entertain us before, during and after afternoon tea.

Tickets will be available soon through the office or online at Trybooking – watch the newsletter for more information. Tea/coffee and scones included in the ticket price. Proceeds will be shared between Emma and Morialta projects.



Congratulations to Judith Purling!

Judith celebrated her 80th birthday recently with family and friends.

David was also in fine spirits, as Judith and he shared some of the many memorable events in their life together.



What will the Indigenous Voice to Parliament achieve?

Adapted from an article by Ella Archibald-Binge on ABC 7.30



Nathan Martin, Kristie Watego and Preston Parter

There has been much discussion about what the Voice will look like, how it will function and whether it will unify or divide the nation. But what will it achieve in practice?

Three young Indigenous people who are bucking the trend and closing the gap in their communities, give their views about whether the 'Voice' has potential to make an impact.

Preston Parter hopes a Voice to Parliament would help improve education nationally. The Birri Gubba man is the principal at Eidsvold State School, which is attended by about 120 predominantly Indigenous students in rural Queensland.

The school started a program to revive the local Aboriginal language, Wakka Wakka. It was transformational. More kids are going to school, enrolments are up and incidents involving bad behaviour have dropped 40 per cent.

But Mr Parter says the true impact cannot be measured in statistics. "A lot of people walk into our school and say, 'Oh gee, it feels nice here.' It's something really special for the community."

But there were challenges as the school tried to weave language elements into daily lessons within the parameters of the existing curriculum, while also adhering to cultural protocols. And despite the positive outcomes, language programs like this remain rare in Australian schools.

Mr Parter says the Voice to Parliament could change that by encouraging policymakers to adopt similar programs nationally. "I'm hoping that what feeds back through the Voice to Parliament ... shows what can make an impact ... is embedded in what we do and becomes the norm ... If every school was like that, we would do pretty well."

Nathan Martin freely admits he is not an expert on the Voice to Parliament. "I have heard of it, but I don't really know much about it," he says.

The Yuin man runs a network of businesses offering subsidised training for young Indigenous people and linking them with construction jobs. He came up with the idea while serving time at Sydney's Long Bay prison. "I decided, 'This is not what I want to do and not where I want to be.' So what was I going to do to change my life?"

A year after his release, he founded his first recruitment company, Yalagan. His latest venture provides training for people in prison and helps them find jobs when they're released.

"We are the most over-incarcerated people on the planet, ... that is one of the key things that need to be addressed in this country," he says. He believes the Voice could be part of the solution. "For a long time, we've been told what's good for us, ... we need our own Voice in parliament, so that we can say what is good for us ... that's the role reversal that needs to take place. But (we) need more education about what the Voice is, and how it would work."

Kristie Watego hopes a Voice might make it easier for health programs like hers to get noticed. She has similar concerns about how the Voice will represent the hundreds of Indigenous language groups across the country. "What I need here in south-east Queensland is very different to someone in the Pilbara, or in Tasmania, so that is concerning for me."

The Bundjalung woman manages a maternal health program called 'Birthing in our Community', which is run by the Brisbane-based Institute for Urban Indigenous Health. In almost a decade, preterm birth rates for mothers in the program have halved, meaning babies are born healthier and are less likely to develop chronic disease later in life. The program is now set to expand, but for years it had struggled to get secure funding. "If the Voice provides a platform for those particular outcomes to be heard, then that's a great thing."

Successive governments have tried and largely failed to improve outcomes for Indigenous people. Now the Voice to Parliament is being touted as a turning point, but whether it fulfils that promise remains to be seen. She is also bracing for a divisive debate as the referendum draws closer and the "no" campaign ramps up.

You can read the full article at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-11-29/what-will-the-indigenous-voice-to-parliament-achieve/101710114>



Easter as an enduring story of loss and hope

Adapted from a article by Andrew Hamilton published in Eureka Street on Good Friday 2020

Over the centuries Easter has changed to accommodate different societies. At first its celebration was workaday – the weekly Eucharist was a celebration to prepare for the return of Christ at the end of time.

When the persecutions stopped, Easter took on a more elaborate appearance – large churches in the cities, a month of fasting to prepare, and a week to celebrate the events leading up to Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Events, games, vegetation and meals at Easter were marked by Jesus’ story. Hot cross buns, Easter eggs, brodetto pasquale, passion plays, Easter lilies and passion fruit owe their names to Easter. Their names remain, even as secular events have come to mark the season: football, the Stawell Gift and country tennis tournaments.

During ‘COVID’ the celebration of Easter in Christian churches in Australia looked more like Lent or Passion week. No football, no concerts, no interstate and international travel and family gatherings. Instead of celebrating the present, many were weighed down by fear and anxiety about the future.

The restrictions took us closer to the original Easter story. That first Sunday dawned as emptily as it threatened to during COVID. There was nothing to celebrate. Jesus’ world had been shut down; his disciples had shut themselves away in fear; the only people in the streets apart from the soldiers were a couple of Jesus’ friends, mostly women, whose love overcame their fear and drew them out to visit his tomb.

As the sun rose on Easter Sunday his followers had not simply lost a friend and a leader – they had lost hope and meaning. They followed him because they believed that God would act through him to free his people. His crucifixion had proved that belief to be absurd and had taken away their hope. Easter dawned in a desert.

This year, as we contemplate all the things that could separate us from hope, Easter invites us to reflect on what matters to us deeply enough to sustain us in the face of loss and death. If the celebrations of Easter were muted, maybe our reflection on our lives and world becomes more sharpened.

Easter Chocolates

Adapted from Be Slavery Free and an article published in The Conversation by J. Dumay et al.

What distinguishes a company that makes “good” chocolate (chocolate untainted by child labour, modern slavery, deforestation and the overuse of agrichemicals) from one that merely makes chocolate?

Our annual Chocolate Scorecard investigation, suggests it might be a mission that goes beyond making food and profit.

Only five of the 38 leading global chocolate makers assessed received a green “good egg” award for exemplary practices. They are Original Beans and Tony’s Chocolonely (Netherlands), Beyond Good (Madagascar), Alter Eco (US), and HALBA (Switzerland). Their mission statements all contain phrases such as “regenerate what you consume” and “heal the future, don’t steal it”.

Be Slavery Free also include Whittaker’s (NZ) and Ferrero (Italy). Of the local manufacturers – both Haigh’s and Robin Menz have information on their websites that indicates they are associated with organisations, such as Rainforest and Cocoa Horizons, who pay farmers a fair price for product. You may wish to ask other local chocolate manufacturers how they ensure the farmers who grow their cocoa are paid a fair price before you buy.

Several major brands – Nestles, Hershey, Mondélez (Cadburys), Mars and Lindt – are ranked behind industry leaders as they fail to pay farmers a living wage.

Firms such as Unilever (which makes Magnum ice creams) and

Mondélez (which makes Cadbury) did not respond to the survey. In contrast to those of industry leaders, Mondélez’s mission statement reads “the extra mile to lead the future of snacking around the world”, rather than tackling environmental or social concerns.

It’s a long way from Cadbury’s original mission. Founder John Cadbury was a Quaker “driven by a passion for social reform” who helped found the forerunner to the RSPCA and planned a “model village” for his workers including schools, shops, parks and childcare.

Based on research by ‘Be Slavery Free’ only between 10 and 25% of cocoa farmers are currently being paid a living income. This is the net annual income required for a household in a particular



place to afford a decent standard of living for all members of that household. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, clothing and other essentials needs including provisions for unexpected events.



Enjoy your Easter bilby or bunny!

Our front garden



Morialta Uniting Church announces itself to be an open, welcoming, and hospitable church in its mission statement and other public documents. While we exhibit such values in many ways, the question has been raised as to whether our church looks that way to anyone passing by. The picture below is from a driver or passenger point of view. The top half of the building is just managing to peep over the top of the bushes.

Any garden is always a work in progress and while our front garden has many attractive elements it has now grown to such an extent that it obscures much of the church from the road. This physical and visual separation from the public seems inconsistent with our claim to be an inviting community.

Both the Property Team and Church Council have considered this situation and have resolved to conduct a working bee in the near future to remove the tallest of the bushes in the middle garden, thereby opening up the church building to people using the street.

If you have any ideas or questions about this please feel free to discuss them with Chris Ayles.

Creator God

*From the First Presbyterian Church, Bend Oregon, USA –
Contributed by Rev David Purling*

Creator God, Jesus who looked like the gardener, spirit of justice, we confess that we have assumed too much that everything will adapt, that justice will be done. That nature will write itself, that the system is fair, that we don't have to change. We've assumed that someone else will do the thing that needs done, that someone else will speak up, that someone else will do good, that someone else will enact peace, that someone else will take care of it.

May we cease being people of assumption and presumption? May we stop shying away from the work of love that is ours to do? May we wake up and stay awake and realize that we are the ones we've been waiting for?

To do justice? To love mercy, to walk with God?

Help us to long for justice. Help us find our part in 'righting what is wrong', mending what is broken.

Remind us we are responsible for the flourishing breath of every human being. Remind us we are responsible for healing the planet and helping it thrive as it was intended to do.

May we live simply, speak bravely, act justly and join you God in the healing and restoration of all things. Amen.

In consideration of the need for Climate Action

From theologian Ruth Gütter

Many Christians believe that God, the creator of heaven and earth, came into the world in Jesus Christ. And that in God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, God's love for the whole creation is revealed in a very special way.

There is witness to this love for creation already in the Old Testament; for example, in the covenant God makes with Noah and in his promise not to destroy the earth again but to preserve it. God makes this covenant with the whole of creation, not just with Noah (Gen 9:8-10). It is not just the human beings but also all their fellow creatures that have a relationship with God!



Consequently, the renewed relationship with God in Christ is important not just for humankind but for the whole creation.

Gütter argues that human freedom and self-limitation within our ecological limits are not mutually exclusive opposites. She states: "that according to the Christian understanding, freedom proves its worth precisely in our being able to limit ourselves responsibly in relation to God and our neighbours."

She has made the case that: "In relation to today's global crises, that means being able to limit myself for the sake of the rights of other people in the present and future generations, but also for the sake of the rights to life of creation around me. The idea of unlimited freedom is not only dangerous; from a Christian point of view, it is also an illusion. Because I myself am not the result of my own doing but of that of my creator and I owe my life to that of other creatures.

My earthly life is limited in time and space. Recognising my finiteness implies becoming wise (Psalm 90:12). Throughout my earthly life I rely on others and am dependent on them – also on non-human creation.

Responsibility together with self-limitation, in the Christian view, are only possible in the belief that human beings have already been addressed by God. Feeding the hungry, caring for those in financial poverty and seeing the image of God in the most vulnerable is the crucible of our Christian story. We must stand in solidarity with those in financial poverty to curb climate change, the effects of which will devastate the poorest communities first.

Ruth Gütter, 'Freedom for Limitation', In 'Kairos for Creation. Confessing Hope for the earth.'

Sculpture "Entrust" in the English Lake District—carved from a single oak tree, to commemorate the centenary of the National Trust.



Special days

April 23rd – Break the Silence Sunday provides the impetus to open up conversation within the church about sexual assault – whether domestic violence, or rape and sexual assault by strangers.

The initiative first began in the United States in 2016 with the idea of creating a dedicated Sunday in the church calendar, and has now extended globally.

At the Special South Australian Synod meeting held on 9 February, 2019, it was agreed to adopt this date (or another suitable Sunday) for 'Break the Silence Sunday'. Congregations are encouraged to explore, within the context of worship, how the voice of survivors may be heard, honoured, and their pain acknowledged. The community is encouraged to explore ways to commit itself to the work of ongoing reflection, support, and social change. It is anticipated that faith communities will:

- acknowledge the reality of rape and sexual violence in our world;
- support survivors by creating a place where they can tell their stories, feel loved and supported, and find encouragement on their healing journey;
- commit ourselves to the work of changing the world, creating a future world free from rape and sexual violence.

April 23rd – World Book Day promotes reading, publishing, and copyright. The original idea was conceived in 1922 by Vicente Clavel as a way to honour the author Miguel de Cervantes and boost the sales of books. It was first celebrated on 7 October 1926, Cervantes' birthday, before being moved to the date of his death, 23rd April. In Catalonia, Spain, it is referred to as The Day of Books and Roses.



It is also the anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, as well as that of the birth or death of several other prominent authors. While it is a historical coincidence that Shakespeare and Cervantes died on the same date – 23rd April 1616 – it was not really the same day. Back then, Spain used the Gregorian calendar and England used the Julian calendar; Shakespeare actually died on 3rd May of the Gregorian calendar.

Restore with nature in Belair National Park

Does your soul long for some rest and restoration in God's beautiful creation? Then come and join a small group of others who meet each Saturday morning for quiet listening and nature connection. You are welcome to come just once or as often as you like any Saturday from 10.00am until 11.30am. Meet next to the BBQ on Saddle Hill Road.



April 25th – ANZAC Day is arguably Australia's most important national occasion. It marks the anniversary of the first key military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. Over 8,000 Australian soldiers were killed and news of the landing at Gallipoli made a profound impact on Australians back at home. The date was officially named Anzac Day in 1916. By 1920, it had become a national day commemorating all Australians who died during the Great War and by 1922, it was a full public holiday. With the advent of World War II, Anzac Day became a day on which to commemorate the lives of Australians lost in that conflict and in recent years it has been further broadened to remember Australians killed in all military operations in which Australia has been involved.



May 7th – World Fair Trade Day was created by the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) which came into existence in 1989. WFTO is a global association of 324 organizations in over 70 countries. It is an inclusive worldwide festival of events celebrating Fair Trade as a tangible contribution to the fight against poverty and exploitation, climate change and the economic crisis that has the greatest impact on the world's most vulnerable populations.

We in Australia take our coffee, bananas, jeans and sneakers for granted, but there are many people in other countries that are not so lucky. Every day, tens of thousands of people in various Asian, African and South American countries work themselves to the bone in nearly unbearable conditions for pennies so we can continue to enjoy those things.

WFTO's top ten priorities are:

- Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers
- Transparency and Accountability
- Fair Trading Practices
- Payment of a Fair Price
- Ensuring no Child Labor and Forced Labor
- Commitment to Non-Discrimination, Gender Equity, and Freedom of Association
- Ensuring Good Working Conditions
- Providing Capacity Building
- Promoting Fair Trade
- Respect for the Environment

You can expect a short introduction, 20 minutes of silent prayer/meditation, 30 minutes of personal journaling, walking or creative expression, ending with shared reflections over BYO morning tea.

Bring whatever you need to be comfortable e.g. chair, mat, journal, pens/pencils, thermos with a hot drink/ morning tea.

For more information - Contact Rachael Litchfield
Phone 0412 304516 or email litchfields333@gmail.com

Blinded by blind faith!

Contributed by my friend Brad from Minnesota

An old man, who had strong faith in the power of his God to protect him and keep him safe, lived alone in a house beside a large river. One spring, after heavy rain upstream, the river flooded and inundated the old man's home. He was forced to climb onto the roof to wait for God to save him.

Soon a neighbour came by in his boat and offered to rescue him, but the old man yelled out to the neighbour not to be concerned, that God would rescue him.

Later a police boat arrived and invited the old man aboard but again he informed them that he was ok and that he knew God would rescue him.

Finally, a rescue helicopter flew over his house and offered to winch him up to safety but again the old man yelled out that he didn't need rescuing as God would save him.



The river continued to rise and finally covered the old man's house and he was washed away and drowned. When he arrived at heaven's door, he was very upset and admonished God for not recognising his faith and rescuing him.

God was somewhat perplexed and asked "What do you mean? First, I sent your neighbour and you sent him away, then I sent a police boat and you refused to get in. Finally, I sent a rescue helicopter. You refused all my attempts to save you!"

Thought for the day!

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."

John Bunyon

Advice for the newly married

Contributed by Chris Ayles

A young recently married woman submitted a message to her tech support seeking advice.

Dear Tech Support,

Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend 5.0 to Husband 1.0 and noticed a distinct slowdown in overall system performance, particularly in the flower and jewellery applications, which operated flawlessly under Boyfriend 5.0.

In addition, Husband 1.0 uninstalled many other valuable programs, such as Romance 9.5 and Personal Attention 6.5, and then installed undesirable programs such as: AFL 5.0, Cricket 3.0 and Golf Clubs 4.1. Conversation 8.0 no longer runs, and House Cleaning 2.6 simply crashes the system. Please note that I have tried running Nagging 5.3 to fix these problems, but to no avail. What can I do?

Signed: Desperate

The reply from tech support "love & marriage advice" was hilarious and genius!

Finding God

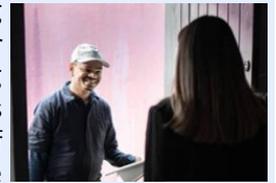
from "A Fatal Grace"

(A Chief Inspector Gamache Mystery Book 2) by Louise Penny

Emilie explained that all her family had been killed. "That's why I asked about the snowstorm. That's what it had felt like, for months and months. As though I was lost in a whiteout. Everything was confused and howling. I couldn't go on. I was going to die. I didn't know how, but I knew I couldn't support the loss any longer. I'd staggered to a stop. Like you in that snowstorm. Lost, disoriented, at a dead end. Mine, of course, was figurative. My cul de sac was in my own living room. Lost in the most familiar, the most comforting of places."

"What happened?" asked Gamache.

"The doorbell rang. I remember trying to decide whether I should answer the door or kill myself. But it rang again and I don't know, maybe it was social training, but I roused myself enough to go. And there was God. He was a road worker," she continued. "He wanted to use the phone. He carried a sign." She stopped, unable for a moment to go any further. Gamache waited. He hoped the sign didn't say "The End is Nigh". The room faded. The only two people in the world were tiny, frail Émilie Longpré and Armand Gamache. "It said Ice Ahead."



They were silent for a moment. "How did you know He was God?" Gamache asked. "When does a bush that burns become a Burning Bush?" Em asked, and Gamache nodded. "My despair disappeared. The grief remained, of course, but I knew then that the world wasn't a dark and desperate place. I was so relieved. In that moment I found hope. This stranger with the sign had given it to me. It sounds ridiculous, I know, but suddenly the gloom was lifted."

Dear Desperate,

First keep in mind, Boyfriend 5.0 is an Entertainment Package, while Husband 1.0 is an Operating System. Please enter command: I thought you loved me.html and try to download Tears 6.2. Do not forget to install the Guilt 3.0 update. If that application works as designed, Husband 1.0 should then automatically run the applications Jewellery 2.0 and Flowers 3.5. However, remember, overuse of the Tears application can cause Husband 1.0 to default to Grumpy Silence 2.5, Happy Hour 7.0, or Beer 6.1. Please note that Beer 6.1 is a very bad program that will download Snoring Loudly Beta version.

Whatever you do, DO NOT, under any circumstances, install Mother-In-Law 1.0 as it runs a virus in the background that will eventually seize control of all your system resources. In addition, please do not attempt to re-install the Boyfriend 5.0 program. These are unsupported applications and will crash Husband 1.0.

In summary, Husband 1.0 is a great program, but it does have limited memory and cannot learn new applications quickly. You might consider buying additional software to improve memory and performance. We recommend Cooking 3.0.

Good Luck!

A prayer for the day of crucifixion

By Rev Bret Myers posted on ProgressiveChristianity.org

O God, let us take in the moment of this day of crucifixion, not remembering it in the context of what came after it, but how it left Jesus' disciples and followers in tragic sadness and heart-wrenched disillusionment.

Prompt us not to make this day too easy on ourselves, but to fully experience the dejection and despair that happens any time when we lose faith in justice in our world...when evil seems to win over goodness... when hope is betrayed by the harshness of cruelty...when faith is left dangling by a thread that we now see as frayed.

We need to feel the entirety of this day, for if we don't, we rob ourselves of the depth of human emotion – of that emotion that in feeling the depths, has greater appreciation for the heights...that acknowledges that if we are somehow able to get through this day, that we may find a strength we did not know was possible tomorrow...that dares to trust in what is unimaginable, not so much because we believe it to be true, but because we don't know how to keep going on if we don't simply choose to trust in what we cannot yet see, or hear, or taste.

Our hearts are heavy with the burden of disbelief – about you, about our world, about humanity, about our own insufficiencies, and about things ever getting better. Teach us not to ignore the doubt, for to do so would be a denial of realities we'd rather not own up to confronting. For we cannot fix what we don't confess needs fixing, for fear that it may be too much for us to bear.

We need courageous souls to move forward in facing our fears, our doubts, our tears, our heartaches, our resignation, our apathy, our justifications, and our weariness of spirit. We can either be immobilized by the heaviness of life, or be willing to keep on walking despite our confidence that we will fall. But it is only in walking, in taking steps forward, in the midst of the emptiness of our fabricated assurances, that we may train our spiritual muscles to endure and to finish the journey that is set before us.

Inspire us to affirm what we can envision but don't yet see as achievable, what we imagine but don't yet see as possible, and what we value but don't yet see as practical. For there is no healing balm for a sorrowing soul unless we have the heart to heal ourselves. There can be no reconciliation of our broken relationships unless we have the faith to trust in one another. And there can be no restoration of the love we'd rather not let go unless we are willing to once again suffer its rejections.

Let these lessons of the cross help us to see our way to accept your calling, no matter how treacherous the way in which it leads. For ours is to follow in Christ's Way, which is your Way; and which by grace might one day be our Way. Blessings let us be.

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Hidden women of history: How 'Lady' Williams founded a great Australian apple

Adapted from an article by Susan Broomhall, Australian Catholic University, published in the *Conversation* January 2023

On Boronia Farm, just outside Donnybrook in Western Australia, stands an 80-something-year-old apple tree (*Malus domestica*). This tree produced an apple no one had seen or tasted before, and was called the Lady Williams. Without the Lady Williams, there could be no Sundowner®, no Pink Lady®, no Bravo® – apple varieties that, along with the Lady Williams, have made enormous contributions to the global apple industry.



Boronia Farm's apple tree is now listed in the register of the National Trust, but few people have heard of Maud Williams who was crucial to the story of this tree and its apples.

From the 1930s, Maud, her husband Arthur and their two boys, Bob and Ron, worked their 12 acres of orchard, with its apples and stone fruit, and 40 cows. Maud collected ideas for plants to grow from catalogues and women's magazines, experimenting with her taste for the unusual. With her eye for horticultural novelty, it was not surprising that she identified the very special qualities of the tree with the bright red apples that had sprung up unexpectedly next to the tank stand beside the house.

The fruit was firm and crisp and could be stored for long periods, so it was ideal for Australia's export market. Over time, the family propagated new trees from the original which had been a chance seedling – a spontaneous creation – whose likely parent cultivars were Granny Smith and Rokewood.

Apples frequently produce chance seedlings and some of our most common apple varieties began this way. But chance seedlings do not reach our supermarkets as a matter of course. For a chance seedling to be put into production and become known as a variety, many factors are involved, not least people who recognise distinctive apples that will have value in their contemporary context.

Only a select few chance seedlings are ever turned into varieties with impact in the orchard industry. For that to happen, there need to be people who make the necessary investment of care, time, and funding – just as Maud did.

Reflecting Maud's importance in the creation of this new variety, the apple was named Lady Williams – which was how the little girl, who lived on a neighbouring farm, called her.

Lady Williams's apples were introduced commercially in 1968, the same year Maud died. In the early 1970s, a team from the WA Department of Agriculture was experimenting with combinations of Lady Williams and Golden Delicious. By 1984, one of the over 100,000 experimental seedlings produced an attractive fruit; it was bright pink, crisp, flavoursome and long-storing. Its commercial name, Pink Lady®, was the first apple variety ever to be trademarked.

All the world's Lady Williams, Pink Lady®, Sundowner® and Bravo® trees share DNA with the original tree Maud Williams had nurtured many years before.