

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

November 2023

Morialta Uniting Church—follow us on Facebook or check out our website at www.morialtauca.org.au

Welcome to our November edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

In this issue, Steven Koske reflects on strengthening the light in one another as a way of putting Christ back into Christmas. We farewell Bob and Mandy and introduce our interim minister Rev Alison Whish, who will join us at Morialta UC for a period starting on 20th November.

Rev David Purling reflects on a photo and story about a statue with no 'No Hands', Rev Christine Garner tells how a brief

encounter can bring rich blessings, Jan Sillett talks more about Homelessness Week and Rev Alison Whish shares a prayer for Saint Andrew's Day – 30th November.

There are recent wedding pictures to enjoy and also memories of a mock wedding about 20 years ago!

St Andrew's Day is also the cut-off date for December Vision. Either drop a copy in to Nicole at the Office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or snout-n-about@bigpond.com

Go well.

Strengthening the light in one another or Putting Christ back into Christmas

Adapted from a sermon by with Rev. Dr. Steven Koski, First Presbyterian Church, Bend, Oregon.



I was writing a sermon in a coffee shop, and eavesdropping on a conversation happening at the table next to me. They were complaining about the secularisation of Christmas and the need to put Christ back

into Christmas, and about political correctness and how silly it was to have to say Happy Holidays instead of Merry Christmas. Now, sitting two tables over was a man who clearly had slept in the freezing cold overnight. He was hunched over, tightly gripping a cup of coffee, as if he hoped it's warmth might somehow find a way to the chill in his bones. I thought to myself, if you're hoping to find Jesus to put Christ back into Christmas, he's right there, tightly gripping his coffee, trying to get warm.

Jesus said: "When you care for those who are struggling, you're caring for me". Maybe the best way to put Christ back into Christmas, or to keep Christ in Christmas, is to do our best to reflect the Christ of Christmas. I asked the man tightly gripping his coffee if he wanted company and if I could buy him something to eat. He politely declined my company, but gladly accepted something to eat.

However, I really doubt that Jesus, who welcomed the outsider, who welcomed the excluded to his table ... Jesus, who made the Samaritan, the despised and hated other, the hero in the story... Jesus, who emptied himself to be the servant of all... I seriously doubt that Jesus would be offended if we say Happy Holidays instead of Merry Christmas.

Jesus would have been more interested in creating a culture of sacred encounters with those who have a different faith tradition, or no faith tradition, than fostering a culture of

judgment and confrontation. So maybe keeping Christ in Christmas is exhibiting tolerance, kindness, generosity towards our neighbours of other faith traditions, or no faith traditions.

Whether we say Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays really doesn't matter nearly as much as the spirit of Christmas and whether people see something of the heart of Christ in us.

Being a reflection of the Christ of Christmas is urgent right now, as hateful rhetoric in sections of the media rises. Hateful rhetoric is being given a public platform. In 1945, Pastor Martin Niemöller wrote: "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me." And I want to add to his words: "Then they came for the LGBTQ plus community, and I did not speak out because I'm not part of that community."

The Holocaust, Auschwitz, did not start from gas chambers. It began with hateful words, stereotypes, prejudice, and escalated to violence. So the best way to keep Christ in Christmas is to make sure wherever hate speaks, love speaks louder.

Friends, the Gospel of John describes the birth of Jesus this way: "The light shines in the darkness, and no amount of darkness can extinguish the light." The amazing claim of Christmas is that in the birth of that child, God lit a candle in the midst of the darkness of human history with a promise, no amount of darkness can extinguish the light of God's love.

Maybe the best way to celebrate the gift of that light is to honour, kindle and strengthen the light in others, especially those who are the target right now of hate and prejudice.

Maybe the question we should keep asking ourselves isn't how to keep Christ in Christmas, but whether or not people see the light of Christ in us.



We say Goodbye to Mandy and Bob

Rev Bob and our resident flautist, Mandy, were farewelled over lunch on Sunday 29th October. We will miss their warm friendship and their contributions to the life of Morialta UC community over the last six and a half years. We wish them well in their move to the Corner Church – our loss is their gain.

(Photos – Anne Ind)

Greetings and blessings from Kimba

From Helen Tucker

Thanks once again for the live-stream link.

We would love to join you this Sunday for Rev Bob’s final service. It is unanimous that we all enjoy Rev Bob’s services and we appreciate you will all definitely agree. We will miss his preaching.

Love and blessings to you all and we pray that you will receive news of another minister to be with you all soon. It has been almost 18 months for us and although our lay preachers are wonderful, if it hadn’t been for Morialta and having the opportunity to live-stream, we really would be finding it challenging.



We are the hands

During World War II, a French village lost a beloved statue of Christ in a bombing raid. The villagers managed to rebuild the statue, except for its hands. Those pieces were never found in the rubble. Finally, the villagers placed a plaque on the statue with the inscription, “I have no hands but yours.”

The saying calls to mind an instruction from St. Teresa of Avila to her Discalced Carmelite community in Spain: “Christ has no body now on earth, but yours; no hands, but yours; no feet, but yours. It is your eyes through which Christ’s compassion looks out to the world; your feet with which he must walk about doing good; your hands with which he blessed humanity; your voice with which his forgiveness is spoken; your heart with which he now loves.”

Contributed by Rev David Purling

Welcome Alison Whish!

Alison writes...



I am looking forward to sharing Advent and Christmas seasons with the Morialta community. While I was only ordained in 2006, I had been active in many things with the Uniting Church, virtually since church union in 1977, which is about when I came to live in SA. For example I was a member of the Social Justice Commission for many years, and convened the Participation of Women Task Group.

While working at Anglicare as their Senior Policy Officer, I was asked to consider moving to Port Pirie to the role of General Manager to what was then Port Pirie Central Mission. (Now Uniting Country SA). From there I went to do some post graduate study in Melbourne, and was called to a placement in Westernport, a parish based around Hastings on Mornington Peninsula.

Then it was to Tasmania for a time as the Presbytery Minister responsible for Leadership Development, a role that eventually took me to all of the UCA congregations across the state.

Finally I returned to SA, to Newland at Victor Harbor and Unley back in the city. I retired at the end of 2021.

There are many young grandchildren in my life these days, so I have been spending time with them. I enjoy music and singing, have been trying to coax my little patch of garden into producing some vegetables and painting icons with egg tempura.

Fellowship News

From Arlene Lomman and Margaret Clogg

This month our group went to Lochend House for a tour of the original home of Charles Campbell, after whom Campbelltown is named. The house has been restored to its former glory by the council and fitted out by the volunteers of the Historical Society. It was so interesting to see how people lived in the mid-1800s and I think we were grateful we didn’t have to endure the living conditions of those times.

The tour followed an interesting talk, by Peter Rumbelow, on the history of Charles Campbell and his family, and after we had been served delicious Devonshire tea we were able to roam around the house and the gardens.

The house is open regularly and is worth a visit if you are interested in things of a bygone era, and especially local history.



2023 Mighty Magill Christmas Market

On the 11th November all roads lead into Chapel Street and Morialta Uniting Church for a day of fellowship, working with Morialta friends and raising funds.

If you have not been tapped on the shoulder for a job, please see Bruce or one of the stall supervisors listed in the news sheet.

Most importantly – make sure all your friends, relatives and networks know about it. It runs from **9.00am until noon** – enjoy the day!



Homelessness Week

From Jan Sillett

In Homelessness Week we are asked to think about the way that Jesus took every opportunity to speak about the homeless and help them. When we consider that Jesus himself was homeless for much of his life, from his birth in a stable to his death on a cross, how does this challenge us to see the face of Jesus in all of those in need?

People working in the homelessness sector often say ‘people experiencing homelessness’ instead of ‘the homeless’ or ‘homeless people’. In Australia, on any night there are 122,000 people who are experiencing homelessness. Jesus identified himself with the homeless and all others in terrible need. That remains the heart of his challenge to all of us. Can we identify with those experiencing homelessness and take action?



Jan's Homeless Week display

Something to ponder

Anonymous

Australia has become a place where entertainers and professional sportspeople are regarded as people of great importance.

Over my life I have needed a doctor... I have needed a teacher... I have needed farmers every day... I have needed an auto mechanic, a plumber, a house painter, and a lot of other everyday people.

But I have never, not even once, needed a pro-sportsperson, a media personality, or a Hollywood entertainer for anything!

Yes/No Vote 14 October 2023

From Cynthia Story

I watched the preliminary journalists chat and chew over what the result of the much-acclaimed referendum would be. Friends, along with me, felt the uselessness of these past weeks, months, years.

Was this going to be another negative push into our intelligence? Surely they should see that including Indigenous people into our celebrated and only way of counting and caring, would have been the compassionate thing to do?

Hundreds of years ago, when white people landed in Australia, with their officers and guns – were there not any caring souls with compassion enough to see the simple humanity in the inhabitants' eyes?

I know that it was the way of the British to take over, overpower, and demand power over any colony they saw sight of – for their greed – lust. But did they all see the black owners of land as a threat?

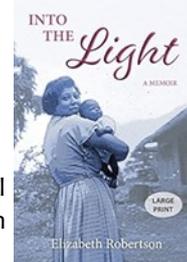
Some ask: “Where is the solution for such a predicament?” Even though many of us ask such a question, and feel saddened for our Indigenous sisters and brothers, we must continue in hope to walk together into the future.

Book Review

Beyond the Light – A Memoir by Elizabeth Robertson

From Rev Christine Garner

It was at a chance encounter in a hospital clinic that I found myself sitting with Elizabeth Robertson.



I was waiting and this tall, elderly woman was brought to sit in the same room. She settled herself comfortably on her walker and we smiled at each other. I noticed her very tranquil expression. She had a pretty, floral, cloth bag which I was admiring when I noticed that it had a bible verse on it and a conversation ensued. She told me she was 97 and had been a nurse, then a missionary nurse in Sudan with the Methodist Church, and then a social worker. At the age of 80 she began postgraduate studies at Tabor College. She currently resides at Resthaven. She asked me about myself and I told her that I am a retired Uniting Church Minister.

She delved into the bag and produced a book which she gave to me as a gift. It is her autobiography and covers her varied and interesting life, her faith, and her journey with God.

After I finished reading it, I sent her a card thanking her and said I would pass it on. It is a delightful book, easy to read and in large print.

Meeting Beth was one of those serendipitous moments when unexpected connections with strangers bring blessings.

How to make a mark!

To make their mark some build cathedrals – others tweet!

David Mitchell

Remembrance Day – 11th November

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*



Reflection – a day for silence

*from the President of the National Council of Churches -
Rev John Gilmore*



With the referendum outcome and the interpretive blame games going on, we were also coming to terms with the dramatic outbreak of violence in Israel and Gaza and the massive impact on the lives of people living in the area – Israeli and Palestinian.

Both these realities are hard to comprehend. One is happening in the setting that gives the people of the three monotheistic faiths our identity. The land we call Holy. It is hard to know what the longer-term impact of this destructive violence will be.

The other reality is in this land called Australia. How is it that we as Australians have taken such a conservative stand in response to a change to the Constitution? We have not recognised in a positive way Australia's First Peoples and have not given them a guaranteed voice. It is also hard to know what the impact of this decision will be in the longer term. As a nation we need deeper ways to celebrate with, and listen to, our Indigenous Australians. The integrity of our nation depends on this.

Two themes have been helpful for me, and both are found in the Psalms of Lament. One is seen in the stark honesty of the Psalmist (Psalm 13):

How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

*How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?*

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

The second theme is trust in God:

*But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.*

I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me.

These themes balance an honest gut response and anguish with faith and confidence in the love of God demonstrated over time.

We are in a season of lament – for Australia, Israel and Gaza – indeed for ourselves. In our lament we join in grief and in the confidence that what is to come will be the outworking of God's unfailing love.

Translating love and sorrow with music

*From "Waiting for the Last Bus: Reflections on Life and Death"
by Richard Holloway*

People like me, who were brought up in a religion of the word, too easily forget that words can't do everything. We like to believe that everything can be said; that there's a verbal equivalent for every human experience. And really great writers almost pull it off. They almost persuade us. Their artistry translates mute emotion into language. Sometimes we shiver with recognition when we read their words because they come so close to expressing what we ourselves have gone through. But they are not art's only form of translation. Some things just can't be said. That's why Edward Hopper, the great American painter of human loneliness, said that if he'd been able to say it he would not have had to paint it. That's even more true of music. And it is why what I am trying to do here is absurd: talking about music instead of playing it. All I can do here is to try to bear witness in a few words to what music can express without any words.

As mourners stand in remembrance of their dead at nightfall, what words can convey how a bugle sounding the Last Post from a castle battlement seems to pour the sorrow of all their loss into the wind? Or how an ancient plainchant melody lifting round a church at evensong carries the same ancient sadness and longing? One of the most remarkable examples of a music that made beauty out of oppression and death is the singing that came from African American slaves in the United States. Think of the longing and pain in the Spirituals and the way they transfigured sorrow into art. One way to connect with their music is through Michael Tippett's oratorio 'A Child of our Time', in which the great spirituals are used like the Passion chorales of Bach to capture and transcend human suffering.

"Steal away, steal away home, I ain't got long to stay here . . ."

We singers of human sorrow might paraphrase Hopper: "If we could say it, we wouldn't have to sing it. But sing it we have to, over all the graves of history and against the force that keeps filling them."



Congratulations...

... to Matthew and Lauren on their wedding day!
We wish them happiness in their life together.



Bob, Mandy and their family enjoyed some time together in Italy, sampling the local produce!



Jan's garden is looking beautiful this spring and brings back memories of church garden parties in years gone by!

Grandson Declan enjoyed participating in worship with us when Jan preached recently!



It was a pleasure to have David sharing a recorded bible reading for us in worship recently, and we hear that he may be preparing a video sermon for us later this month!



The Wedding Reception of the Decade!

Back in the early 1990s, the newly formed Morialta UC hosted the "Wedding Reception of the Decade". The bride and groom (Alison Lockett and Chris Ayles) were supported by bridesmaids Kathy Williams and Pam Johnson, best man Colin Cargill and groomsman Peter Sillett. The bride's parents were Jill Pope and the late Don Bennier.

The happy couple not only survived the reception, but miraculously survived leaving on a bicycle with the bride perched gaily (and precariously) on the handlebars!



International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women – 25th November

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today. It remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it.

In general terms, it manifests itself in physical, sexual and psychological forms, encompassing:

- intimate partner violence (battering, psychological abuse, marital rape, femicide);
- sexual violence and harassment (rape, forced sexual acts, unwanted sexual advances, child sexual abuse, forced marriage, street harassment, stalking, cyber-harassment);
- human trafficking (slavery, sexual exploitation);
- female genital mutilation; and
- child marriage.



The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993 defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in,

or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

The adverse psychological, sexual and reproductive health consequences of VAWG affect women at all stages of their life. For example, early-set educational disadvantages not only represent the primary obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls; down the line they are also to blame for restricting access to higher education and even translate into limited opportunities for women in the labour market.

While gender-based violence can happen to anyone, anywhere, some women and girls are particularly vulnerable - for instance, young girls and older women, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, migrants and refugees, indigenous women and ethnic minorities, or women and girls living with HIV and disabilities, and those living through humanitarian crises.



In Australia, in 2021/22, 5606 women (average of 15 women per day) were hospitalised due to family and domestic violence. One in four women (27%) has experienced violence, emotional abuse, or economic abuse by a cohabitating partner since the age of 15. One in three women (31%) has experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

You can read more and join support groups at <https://www.un.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day>

Hospitality: Show unusual kindness

Contributed by Rev David Purling from Resources for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, World Council of Churches, 2020

Acts 28:1-2, 7 “After we had reached safety, we then learned that the island was called Malta. The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us round it... Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days.”



Reflection

After the traumas and conflicts of the storm at sea, the practical care offered by the islanders is experienced as an unusual kindness by those washed up on the shores. Such kindness demonstrates our common humanity. The Gospel teaches us that when we care for those in distress we are showing love to Christ himself (cf. Matthew 25:40). Furthermore, when we show loving kindness to the weak and dispossessed we are attuning our hearts to the heart of God in which the poor have a special place. Welcoming outsiders, whether they be people of other cultures or beliefs, immigrants or refugees, is both to love Christ himself, and to love as God loves. As Christians, we are called to step out in faith and reach out with God’s all-embracing love, even to those we find difficult to love.

Prayer

God of the orphan, the widow and the stranger, instil in our hearts a deep sense of hospitality. Open our eyes and hearts when you ask us to feed you, to clothe you and to visit you. May our churches participate in the ending of hunger, thirst and isolation and in overcoming barriers that prevent the welcome of all people. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus, who is present in the least of our sisters and brothers. Amen

A prayer for St Andrew’s Day

Contributed by Rev Alison Whish

God, our loving Creator, St Andrew introduced Peter, the Greek visitors, and the little boy with loaves and fishes, to Jesus.

May we be like Andrew in sharing friendship and hospitality, and in faithfulness to Jesus and his realm of justice, love and peace.

May Scotland and all nations be places in which everyone matters, everyone has an honoured place, and the dignity of each is assured by our faith in you as creator of us all.

Written especially for St. Andrew’s Day (30th November) by the Glasgow Churches Together. (adapted)

How to hack your home cooling

From Choice

The prediction is for a long, hot summer and increasing electricity prices. So here are a few tips from home cooling experts that'll help you keep your cool while keeping a lid on your energy bills. It'll require a few small changes to your home and your habits, but once your next electricity bill arrives you'll be glad you made the effort.

Change your habits

- **Air con:** Aim for 8°C difference to outside temperature and maintain your air conditioner
- **Clean:** Cleaning your air conditioner regularly will make it more efficient.
- **Fans:** Use ceiling, pedestal, and tower fans to stay cool.
- **Temperature:** Open windows when it's cooler outside; close when it's hotter outside.
- **Night:** Turn on appliances like dishwashers at bedtime if you do not have solar panels.



Change your home

- **Insulate:** Insulated ceilings can make houses 35% cooler.
- **Seal:** Use insulation strips around windows and doors.
- **Ventilate:** Add whirly-birds or under-eave vents and open the house up when it cools at night.
- **Shade:** Shade the house with awnings, blinds, pergolas and deciduous trees.
- **Paint and double glaze:** Paint your house a lighter colour and have the windows double glazed.

To read the full article – type “How to hack your home cooling - top 10 tips” into your search engine and scroll down to the Choice website.

Health impacts of a changing climate

Adapted from the WHO website



While many of us recognise that changes are occurring to our weather patterns, with more frequent flooding and more extreme bush fires, what is a changing climate doing to our health?

To begin with severe weather increases the risk of injuries and fatalities from flooding, fire and even falling trees. It is also impacting on the mental health of those who experience such events.

Prolonged periods of extreme temperatures are also responsible for an increase in heat-related illness and death, as well as cardiovascular failure.

Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns are causing changes in vector ecology, resulting in diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, encephalitis, Rift Valley fever, Lyme disease, west Nile fever and Japanese encephalitis occurring in new regions.

Changes to water and food supplies are already impacting on food security, leading to an increase in malnutrition and diarrhoeal diseases, especially in children. Changes to water quality are increasing the risk of diseases such as cholera, cryptosporidiosis, campylobacter, leptospirosis and harmful algal blooms.

Environmental degradation, which is due in part to both a changing climate and human activities, is causing forced migration, civil conflict, and mental health impacts.

Air pollution and increasing allergens, while not necessarily a result of a changing climate, are causing an increase in asthma, respiratory allergies, and cardiovascular disease.



Champions of human rights – Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)

Contributed by Rev David Purling

David lives in the Warrina Aged Care facility, where there are several staff of Indian heritage. On 2nd October he was reminded that it was not only Australia's 8-hour day holiday, but a holiday in India for Gandhi.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is widely recognized as one of the twentieth century's greatest political and spiritual leaders. Honoured in India as the father of the nation, he pioneered and practiced the principle of Satyagraha – resistance to tyranny through mass nonviolent civil disobedience.

While leading nationwide campaigns to ease poverty, expand women's rights, build religious and ethnic harmony, and eliminate the injustices of the caste system, Gandhi supremely

applied the principles of nonviolent civil disobedience, playing a key role in freeing India from foreign domination.

He was often imprisoned for his actions, sometimes for years, but he accomplished his aim in 1947, when India gained its independence from Britain.

Due to his stature, he is now referred to as Mahatma, meaning “great soul.” World civil rights leaders—from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Nelson Mandela—have credited Gandhi as a



source of inspiration in their struggles to achieve equal rights for their people.

Adelaide Male Voice Choir @ Morialta

Our thanks to the AMVC for a wonderful afternoon of music, singing and fun.

The concert was a great success and Morialta's bank balance has increased by more than \$800.00.

Thanks also to those who came to enjoy the music, those who helped sell tickets, those who helped set up and those who prepared and served afternoon tea.

The choir has expressed interest in making a return visit to Morialta later next year.



How do we read the Bible?

Adapted from a post by Rev. Steven Koski
First Presbyterian Church, Bend, Oregon

Original article contributed by Rev David Purling

Rather than starting with answers from the places we think we are right, we should welcome questions. Questions lead us to deeper and more authentic conversations. The poet Yehuda Amichi wrote, "In the places we are right, flowers never grow in the Spring."

So, what role does the Bible play in our faith, and how are we to read the Bible?

Imagine a continuum where on one end you have people who take every word of the Bible literally as having come straight from God. On the other end you have people who see the Bible as a primitive, archaic book of fairy tales not relevant to their lives.

Koski suggests neither group take the Bible seriously. Both see the Bible through a dualistic lens of right/wrong, true/false, fact/fiction.

What if we learned to read the Bible through the lens of curiosity and wonder? To quote Marcus Borg: "The Bible is true, and some of it actually happened."

Imagine a continuum, instead, with literal on one end and literature on the other end. Literal is about facts. Literature is about meaning.

When we treat the Bible literally we assume there's one truth and one answer.

Treating the Bible as literature is about meaning where we wrestle with the Bible. We argue with the Bible and explore it with curiosity and wonder. We treat the Bible as a



prism exploring it from different angles, trusting light will be reflected in more than one way. We don't read the Bible as either/or where there is one answer and one truth. We read it as both/and holding not just one meaning but many meanings.

We should not turn to the Bible to end a conversation. We should turn to the Bible to start a conversation. If we are willing to wrestle with the Bible, the more the Bible will wrestle with us, leading to a deeper, richer, and more authentic faith.

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment.
Care for the poor.
FORGIVE OFTEN.
REJECT RACISM.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
EMBRACE DIVERSITY.
LOVE GOD.
Enjoy this life.



Fish can feel pain

Adapted from "The Veterinarian"

Scientists in Sweden have produced empirical evidence that fish experience pain and are now developing ways to recognise and assess pain in fish.

This will enable marine scientists working with fish to provide improved animal welfare when working on production and management research.

It may also help solve the age-old argument about fishing. Is pulling a fish out of water like holding a dog underwater?