

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

May 2025

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

Welcome to our May edition!

Our front page reflection is from bell hooks about surrendering to love and relinquishing power - a much-needed action in today's world.

We have tributes for Kingsley Stephens, Pope Francis and Margaret Oakley.

Surrendering to love

Adapted from an article by American author bell hooks (1952–2021)

It is difficult to wait. No doubt that is why biblical scriptures urge the seeker to learn how to wait, for waiting renews our strength.

When we surrender to the “wait” we allow changes to emerge within us without anticipation or struggle. When we do this we are stepping out, on faith. In Buddhist terms this practice of surrender, of letting go, makes it possible for us to enter a space of compassion where we can feel sympathy for ourselves and others....

Redemptive love lures us and calls us toward the possibility of healing. We cannot account for the presence of the heart's knowledge. Like all great mysteries, we are all mysteriously called to love no matter the conditions of our lives, the degree of our depravity or despair. The persistence of this call gives us reason to hope.... Renewing our faith in love's promise, hope is our covenant....

To return to love, to know perfect love, we surrender the will to power. It is this revelation that makes the scriptures on perfect love so prophetic and revolutionary for our times. We cannot know love if we remain unable to surrender our attachment to power, if any feeling of vulnerability strikes terror in our hearts. Lovelessness torments.

As our cultural awareness grows of the ways we are seduced away from love, away from the knowledge that love heals, our anguish intensifies. But so does our yearning. As we yearn, we make ourselves ready to receive the love that is coming to us, as gift, as promise, as earthly paradise.



There's also lots of news from our Morialta Community, including a special “lift-out” on the 170th celebrations.

The **deadline for the next Vision will be 29th May**. Either drop contributions in to the church office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or snout-n-about@bigpond.com

Go well.

Brian McLaren describes how healing occurs when we release our need for supremacy, certainty, and control.

The more we hear the sound of the genuine, the more the deepest habits of our hearts are renovated and remodelled in the way of love, and the more supremacy loses its appeal.... We surrender the supremacy of our ego, our self-centred demands for power, pleasure, prestige, prominence. We surrender the supremacy of our group, whether that group is defined by religion, race, politics, nationality, economic class, social status, or whatever. We even surrender the supremacy of our species, realizing that humans can't survive and thrive unless the plankton and trees, the soil and bees, and the climate and seas thrive too. We gladly shed supremacy to make room for solidarity. That gain, we discover, is worth every cost....

As the desire to dominate slips through our fingers, something in us dies.... But in the letting go, something new comes, is born, begins, grows: a sense of connection, of communion and union and belonging. We descend from the ladders and pedestals we have erected, and we rejoin the community of creation, the network of shalom....

The loss is no small thing, ah, but the gain is incomparably greater.

bell hooks is the pen name of Gloria Jean Watkins. She took the name from her grandmother, for whom she had tremendous regard, deciding to use lower case letters for herself to distinguish between them.



Uniting Church in Australia - response to the federal election

We applaud the graciousness with which both the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader acknowledged the result of the Federal Election last night.

Peter Dutton conceded the election and congratulated Ali France on her win in the seat of Dickson with great dignity and respect. Anthony Albanese chided those in his audience who were cheering his opponent's loss and reminded us that in Australia we are kind and fair. This is what we dream politics could be - respectful, human, generous.

We congratulate Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the Australian Labor Party on re-election. In this coming season let us have rational and respectful debate about the issues that matter, and brave and compassionate action.

We will continue to advocate to our national leaders for God's creation, for the common good of all, and for the deep wisdom of justice and mercy.





Goodbye to Jonathan and welcome to Peter

We say goodbye and thanks to Rev. Dr Jonathan Barker for his ministry of preaching and pastoral care over the past 6 months. We wish him well as he takes a short break interstate to be with family before he returns to his home church, Unley UC.

We welcome Rev. Dr Peter Trudinger, who has agreed to be our supply minister until Rev. Anne Butler arrives in June. Peter is a valued member of MUC and we welcome him in his expanded role.



We welcome the Rev Anne Butler

Anne was born on the other side of the world, and came to live in Australia as part of the British migration (ten-pound poms).

Church became her aunts and uncles, and grandparents, even though her parents did not attend. She began reading the scriptures, originally following the strict Kosher rules laid out in Leviticus. Then she found the gospels, and was inspired and wanted to be on the team of Jesus.

From a call to ministry at 15, she completed high school and spent a year filing and checking invoices at Harris Scarfe Industrial (now Mile End Bunnings).

She met and married Paul, her childhood sweetheart while involved with Youth Theatre, nursing at Lyell McEwin Hospital, and some teacher training.

After many years of Theological Education, she was ordained at 28, while expecting their first child. The good people of Hare Street Church, in the Plympton parish, welcomed the little family. After several years maternity leave with another child, she returned to ministry as supply minister at Pilgrim, then to her home church at Para Hills in a part time placement.

While there her marriage ended, she learned heaps about herself, and eventually met June on a family camp combined with Modbury/Para Vista. Within a year they had bought a house for their combined family of 7, but then a call from Newland/Yilki meant a move to Victor Harbor.

Back to the city for 8 years at Clayton Wesley, followed by several years in Supply and Aged Care Chaplaincy.

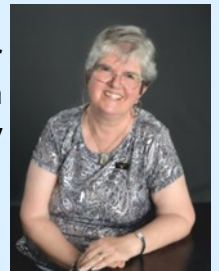
They built a home in the hills at Mylor as a retreat centre and 'B & B', and ran the local shop and even a café in Mount Barker. Port Elliot were willing to have their part time minister live elsewhere, and a few years ago amalgamated with Newland to become stronger in their local mission. Anne responded to a call to Seaford to be part of Seaford Christian Churches, another part time placement, but this one with other denominations, enabling a café, an opshop and community outreach together.

Anne and June married in early 2024.

Anne has spent a lifetime wrestling with the text, eager to find the Spirit's meaning for today hidden among the ancient words. Luke is her favourite gospel, where Chapter 15 outlines God as shepherd, cleaning woman and forgiving Father.

We are called to follow the example and wisdom of Jesus – still valid 2000 years later. Our greatest gift is one another.

The induction of Rev. Anne Butler at Morialta UC will be at 2.00pm on Sunday 1st June followed by afternoon tea.



Church Council news, end of April 2025 – Please read!

The new, expanded council convened at the church on Wednesday evening 30 April, a change of time made necessary to accommodate new elders and their availability;

- First meeting for newly elected elders looked at some resources for church councils including a booklet that provides insight for elders. We also viewed the first video of a series prepared for church councils by NSW&ACT Synod;
- Welcomed Rev. Dr Peter Trudinger to his first church council meeting;
- Held elections for leadership positions on council and appointed council secretary and treasurer. Church council secretary will be Helena Begg. We thanked

Rhonda Amber for her service in this role over many years. Church treasurer is Carole Lyons. Chairperson is Bruce Ind and deputy chairperson is Margaret Cargill;

- Council prepared responses to the synod Property and Mission Survey.

For more information on any of these items, please ask any member of Church Council:

Bruce Ind, Margaret Cargill, Rhonda Amber, Carole Lyons, Chris Ayles, Helena Begg, John Secombe, Leonie Brown, Michele Bennier, Anne Ind, Austin Pheonix or Jan Sillett.

Leigh Newton and Maarten Ryder

Sunday 25th May at 2pm

at Morialta UC



Leigh Newton is a South Australian singer songwriter known for his music published in various church song collections. He will join with Maarten Ryder for an afternoon of music at Morialta followed by afternoon tea around 3.15pm.

Leigh accompanies himself on piano and guitar with Maarten Ryder playing double bass and various woodwind instruments. Maarten and Leigh were members of the folk band, Three Corner Jack in the 1990s.

Many of Leigh's songs are known Australia wide, including well known acoustic songs dating back to the 1970s.

Tickets \$25 (children free) including afternoon tea, now available on **Trybooking** <https://www.trybooking.com/DAZAS> or on Sundays or from the Church Office (8331 9344).

Why not post the concert on your Facebook page and bring along some friends to enjoy the music and afternoon tea with you?

In memoriam



"Pope Francis was a voice of mercy in a time of noise. He walked with humility, spoke with fire and dared to love the unloved. He reminded the world that compassion is not weakness and faith doesn't have to shout to be heard. May he rest in the eternal peace so often preached." *Bob Dylan*

Message from Morialta UC Church Council to the clergy and members of St Joseph's Tranmere

On behalf of the Morialta Uniting Church we extend our deepest condolences to the clergy and members of St Joseph's Catholic Church, Tranmere on the death of Pope Francis. He was truly a shepherd of grace and compassion. Our members join with all who mourn and grieve this profound loss.

Pope Francis was a beacon of humility and compassion, known for his love of the poor and care for creation. He took his vow of poverty seriously and his papacy was marked by the simplicity and grace of servant leadership.

One of his important contributions to all Christians and to the world was *Laudato si'* which provided a 'road map' for leaders and lay people in caring for creation.

We have always valued our ecumenical faith journey with members of St Joseph's Tranmere. We acknowledge the leadership of the Magill Inter-Church Council provided by members of St Joseph's, especially Father John Swan and Stephanie Roach over many years.

While we join with you in sorrow at this time, we also give thanks and praise for a great man. A man who called us all to "be a church of the poor and for the poor" and to purposely care for the creation. He was a man who echoed Christ's own mission and he challenged us all to live with greater generosity and compassion.

With every blessing and in the peace of Christ

Bruce Ind, Chairperson, Morialta Uniting Church

Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish.

— John Paul II

A moving moment in Canberra

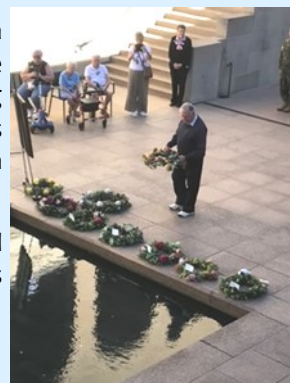
Doug Hosking recently participated in a 4-trains, 4-cities tour. (It actually turned out to be 3 trains as the derailment of a freight train in Melbourne blocked the "Overland" which meant passengers had to travel the final leg by coach).

On Monday 17th March the tour visited the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. During the visit Doug was speaking with a staff member and related that his father had served in WW2 and Jennie's father had served in WW1 and WW2. Their son had also served in the RAF (UK) for 9 years. As a consequence, Doug was invited to be one of those to lay a wreath in the "Last Post Ceremony".

What a privilege for Doug. As a piper played a lament, 2 Defence Force members, 3 families, Doug and another 2 children laid wreaths in turn in this very solemn ceremony.

There were 156 school children and up to 100 adults who witnessed this event.

Lest we forget.



God gives us highly evolved people to pull us all forward. The Christian word for them was simply "saint." We cannot imagine something until we see it through a living model or archetypal figure.

— Richard Rohr



Kingsley Ralph Stephens (1932-2025)

Kingsley was born in North Adelaide on June 28th 1932 to parents Emily and Ralph. The family lived in Adelaide until his father, who was working as a fitter and turner, moved to Peterborough, where he worked for the railways. Kingsley attended Peterborough school where he made

lasting friends including Gilbert Antuar.

Later the family moved back to Adelaide and lived with his grandparents at College Park. Kingsley continued his schooling at Norwood Boys Technical school.

After leaving school he began an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic at Tilbrooks Brake Service. On completion of his apprenticeship, he worked at several places during his working life. This included the Port Adelaide Haulage Company repairing tow motors on the wharves, Telecom (PMG) workshops, Power Brakes at Norwood, and Repco Brake and Clutch as a manager for the last 19 years of his working life. His knowledge was passed on during lectures at the Automotive Trade School where he developed and conducted courses on automotive brakes, from passenger cars to heavy vehicles.

Kingsley married Helen in January 1954 and he took on building a home at 18 Central Avenue, Magill. The home is still standing today. The family moved into a partially built home and the finishing was done after work and at weekends for many months.

Over time they welcomed four boys - Paul, Neale, Robert and Brett, and soon another room had to be added to cater for the family. Kingsley built this extra room as well.

As the boys grew older they joined the Scouts and Kingsley was soon giving a hand to the leader, before becoming a "Chief". He stayed as leader while all four boys went through cubs and Scouts where they all made life-long friendships.

After retiring, a caravan was purchased giving an opportunity to travel with lifelong friends, Kevin and Averil Nash, and other couples, and to explore many places of interest.

They were saddened when their son Neale developed Motor Neurone Disease, but they were able to make weekly visits to him and Rosie at Nuriootpa, and do an odd job if it was needed.

His grandchildren fondly remember playing in the shed with Grandpa's trains, a big passion of Kingsley's, where he spent countless hours creating tracks, buildings and trees out of twigs and green kitchen scourers.

Over the last two years, since he moved into care at Lutheran Homes, it has meant that Helen could visit him daily. They were able to provide the care that he needed with his declining health and his family were grateful for that.

Kingsley's contributions to Rostrevor and Magill Uniting Churches, and later to Morialta UC, were wide ranging and varied. He was a valued member of the singing group and participated in concerts. He was an original member of "the paper boys" and continued until it closed. He was a member of the "Lunch on Chapel" team, he was a member of the property team for over 2 decades (from its formation) and was a general "Mr Fixit" "who just fixed things that needed fixing." He and several others were instrumental in refurbishing the KUCA rooms.

Two comments from members of Morialta sum him up – "I don't remember Kingsley as being one of the deacons or in a leadership role, but his opinion was sought on a multitude of subjects" and "Kingsley was a good bloke".

Kingsley's life was one of working hard for his family and helping others when he could. He was a wonderful husband, dad, grandfather and great grandfather, brother and friend to many.



Kingsley (left) and Geoff Roberts (right) working in the MUC kitchen



Ken Palmer (left), Geoff Roberts (middle) and Kingsley (right) moving pews in the church

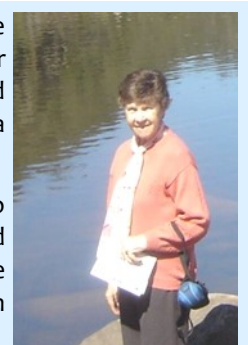
Margaret Maude Oakley (1933-2025)

Margaret Oakley, along with her husband Rev Barry Oakley, was a member of our 'On-line' worshipping community for over 2 years. During that time she was only able to join us in person on one occasion, but she and Barry faithfully joined in our worship via the live-stream most Sundays. They even regarded themselves as members of MUC.

Those of us who were privileged to know this gracious lady knew her as a valued, loyal and caring friend. Margaret was a

true follower of Jesus and her life exemplified his teaching – concerned for justice and the creation, the sick and those who sometimes find life a challenge.

We extend our love and condolences to Barry and to Margaret's family and friends and give thanks for the privilege of walking with her for some of our own journey.



Celebrating 170 years!

6 April 2025

On 6th April we celebrated 170 years of a church on our site at 26 Chapel Street, Magill. (This year is also the 150th anniversary of the current church building. It was a day to recognize the faith and determination of those who planned, financed and built the original church on the site, to remember those who have gone before us in this place and to meet with old and new friends.

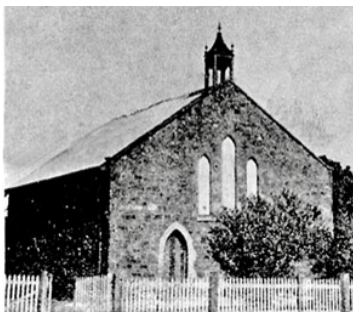
We heard an outline of the history of activities at the church and were also able to get a first look at the recently obtained original plans for the current church building, which came to auction this year and were bought on behalf of the church. These are now on display in the newly refurbished church foyer.

We celebrate our history and heritage and look forward with hope and faith to what the coming years will bring.

So, where do we come from?

Adapted from an article by Chris Ayles

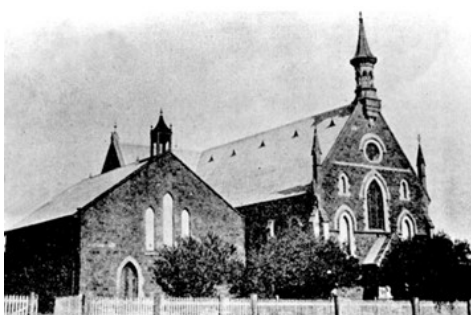
First I must acknowledge the late Olive Walton for her extensive documentation of this church's history. I leant on it heavily to prepare this history, as well as several of our longer serving members.



Two things stand out about our ancestors. First was their determination, wisdom, courage and faith which enabled them to achieve everything they did. The other was the difficulty they must have had in making some of the decisions they did.

So I invite you to engage your imagination as we travel through some of those milestones.

We start in MacGill Village in the early 1850s. For the past twelve years occasional church services have been held by preachers visiting from Adelaide, but we and the other Wesleyan Methodist families desire something more consistent, so we begin meeting in homes for "prayer and praise".



Next, enough of us felt the need for something more permanent and by May 1854 money had been raised, land found and purchased. In less than 12 months a chapel had been built, with the first worship service conducted on the 8th April, 1855.

This building we are in and live streaming from today followed 20 short years later. The building has been through an ongoing series of additions and modifications ever since.

In its early years our church carried a significant financial debt. Conducting fund raising events, obtaining loans and donations was a constant and costly endeavour, so much so that early in the depression of the 1930s the treasurer announced that there were insufficient funds to meet existing debts. It wasn't until 1949 that all loans were paid off. For over 90 years our forebears kept this church going through scary financial uncertainty.

Over the early years the congregation grew as more families moved into the district and in 1887 the first ordained minister was appointed. But that process has also had its hiccups over the years. In 1897, the finances were so parlous that they decided not to appoint a resident minister – a situation that persisted for the next 20 years.



Young men and women at working bee with Rev Dickson 1947

A Sunday school was established in 1867 to complement the evening adult classes. After a slow start, the Sunday school flourished over the years with the need for four age-related departments. By the 1940s and 50s the Sunday School anniversary service saw 200 to 300 children perched on a rickety tiered seating at the front of the church.
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A choir had been formed by 1875 and continued, with the participation of some distinguished musicians, for over 100 years.

Many other church groups have existed to provide Christian education, fellowship and recreational activities. Youth Groups, Knights and Comrades, Christian Endeavour, various fellowship groups, men's, women's, day and evening, groups supporting local and overseas mission projects, sporting clubs - netball, still very strong, cricket, tennis and footy. (Yes, we used to have our own footy team!)



What started as a tape ministry – the distribution of audio tapes of services, has evolved into the live streaming of worship that dozens of people participate in each week.

From its inception this congregation has had a heart for community service as well as social and environmental justice. In the early years the church distributed money to community members suffering financial hardship. In 1870 a “Poor Steward” was appointed.

Groups receiving funding and in person support have included the Kate Cocks Babies’ Home, Hackham West Building Fund, My Club for intellectually disabled children, Lentara Children’s Home, outback patrol missions, the Birdsville Hospital and overseas communities in South America, the Middle East, Papua New Guinea and across the Pacific.

Other activities include tree planting at Rockleigh and installing solar panels across all our properties, our provision of housing for country tertiary students, the Friendship Centre, and Lunch on Chapel, just to mention a few.

After Union the Methodist Churches of Magill, Newton and Montacute, along with Finchley Park Presbyterian and Rostrevor Congregational Churches, formed a Uniting Parish renamed ‘Morialta Parish’ in 1977. In 1990 this suite of buildings became home for the majority of the Morialta Uniting Church congregation.

And so here we are today celebrating our history, enjoying the present and looking to the future with hope.



Celebrations continued over a shared lunch!



170th Anniversary of MUC – Memories

Extract from Mark Waters' sermon on 6th April



Today's Psalm 126 is full of praise and joy, fitting for today. For me it channels a little bit of Kyle, my dad, who worshipped here as his home church for 50 years. "Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy". His laugh filled a room and was infectious. Amongst many other things, Dad loved being part of the Wednesday

Friendship Club. I remember his farewell here where his sharp mind and ability to tell a story still stood out at the age of 85.

But it was my mum, Brenda, who was the power behind the throne. Dad often was away from church because of his wider church, school or army duties. Brenda was the stalwart member of the congregation, who was qualified as the Social Worker and who quietly went about her mission to provide support to others. Visiting the Magill old folks' home; spending the day at the Adelaide Central Mission Alcohol and Other Drug facility off Wright Street; visiting Kahlyn Hospital where she carried out lay chaplaincy for people experiencing mental health issues, substance use or suicidal thoughts. [Brenda not only did but encouraged others to do. Ed].

For me, being part of Sunday School and youth group here was formative. The Eisteddfods, the musicals and the revues all stick in my mind. Our combined camps with Westbourne Park at the Ranch (now within UnitingCare SA as Eleanora) were special. There were both Easter camps and the summer camp with kids with intellectual disabilities from Minda where we were the carers for a young person assigned to us where

we were responsible for showering, toileting, feeding and involving them in activities such as swimming, games etc. These were instrumental in building empathy and the ability to accept difference.

The photo of the pulpit and choir stalls earlier reminds me of the process that we undertook to open up the worshipping space here so that we could experience all sorts of worshipping styles including creative dance, theatre, music etc.

My brothers were part of the church cricket team, whereas I played basketball for the church.

I appreciated engaging with our youth workers and leaders, Rob Brown, Leigh Newton, Jeff Bone and Neryl McCallum. Later I loved being part of the youth leadership with Betty Hosking (McCormack).

Having been commissioned as a pastor in the role of Director of UnitingCare SA, my office sits 5 metres around from 'the Kyle Waters Room'. Having spent a lifetime trying to extricate myself from the shadow of the old man, I find myself in a place where my life in the church and my career in the community sector have come together in a comfortable, harmonious synergy.

Today we have had a chance to reflect upon our memories. There are so many legacies that have been left by the people and the learning that has gone before. We celebrate all of that history and want to keep learning from it. The heritage that has been gifted to us counts for so much and now we want to find ways in which it may continue to grow.



Absolutely superb address for a great occasion mate! 🙏👏

From Mel Waters

A beautifully compiled and conducted service of celebration! My warmest congratulations on 170 years of worship, mission, outreach and service.

Morialta Uniting Church was our family church for 50 years, and as Mark says, a hugely significant part of the lives of Dad, Mum and my brothers throughout that half century.

Now in my seventh decade as a church organist, Eric May and the Magill Methodist Church choir inspired some of my earliest musical memories and started me on my professional journey from the age of twelve.

Long live Morialta Uniting Church and every blessing always!

Magill Methodist Church in the 1950s

Adapted from an article by Helen McDonald (nee Treloar)

Rhonda (my dear friend of 54 years) ask if I would share something about my time at the Magill Methodist Church.

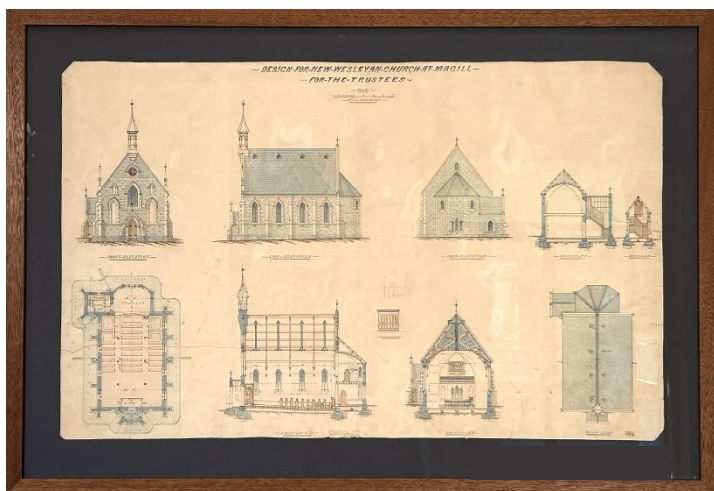
My parents, Gordon and Bessie, met at Maughan Methodist Church, where Bessie sang in the choir and Gordon was an usher. They married in Maughan Church in 1935. They had three daughters, Jennifer (Jen), Elizabeth (Beth) and me, Helen.

In 1948, when I was 6 years old, our family moved from Walkerville to Norton Summit. We attended Ashton Methodist Church, but after a few years Mum and Dad felt we children needed to broaden our horizons and be amongst younger

people, so in 1953 we started going down the hill to attend the Magill Methodist Church, where Rev. Reg Medson was the minister.

Dad got involved in Christian Endeavour and Sunday School. Mum, Jen and Beth joined the choir. Unfortunately, as we had to staff the 24-hour telephone exchange, Dad and I would attend the morning services, then he and all three of us girls would attend at 3pm for Sunday School. Mum, Jen and Beth would all return for the Sunday evening service! Back then Sunday was a busy day and thank goodness they didn't play football on Sundays!





The original plans for the current church building were revealed to the congregation after recently coming into our possession. You can now see them in the church foyer.

**Extract from Adelaide Observer
newspaper Saturday 24 October 1875**

The foundation stone of a new Wesleyan Church at Magill was laid by Mrs Longbottom. The attendance of spectators was large notwithstanding the weather, and a crowded meeting was held in the evening, ... The proceeds of the special service were £130 and £500 had been previously promised and subscribed.

**Extract from Adelaide Observer
newspaper Saturday 15 January 1876**

The Wesleyan Church have built a commodious church, at Magill 55 ft. by 30 ft. in the clear. The style is Gothic with truncated ceiling divided into panels with moulded ribs resting on dwarf columns, finished with ornamental capitals and bosses at the foot. The floor has a fall front to back of about 2 ft. The average height from floor to ceiling is 28 ft. ... The architect is Mr. Garlick and Mr. Bunday has the contract at £1,800.

TO BUILDERS.—TENDERS are invited until noon of Saturday, May 2, for the **ERECTION** of a **WESLEYAN CHURCH** at **MAGILL**.

Plans, &c., may be seen at this office.
Neither the lowest nor any tender necessarily accepted.

D. GARLICK, Architect,
Register Chambers.
Adelaide, April 16, 1874. stth7

From the Express and Telegraph newspaper, April 16, 1874



**Extract from Express and Telegraph
newspaper, Tuesday 19 October 1875 – page 2**

The opening services in connection with the new Wesleyan Church at Magill were commenced last week, and concluded on Monday, the 18th inst. A bazaar was opened on Thursday at 2.00 p.m., by the President of the Conference, the Rev. J. Bickford, continued until Saturday night and exceedingly well patronised, the proceed being about £70. [Was this the first Mighty Magill Market and we complain that 9.00am until 12 noon is long enough? Ed]

On Sunday 17th inst. sermons were preached in the new church, in the morning by Rev. W.P. Wells and in the afternoon by Rev. S. Knight. Congregations were unusually large and liberal collections were taken up.

On the following day a tea and public meeting was held ... and the congregation, which was very large appeared to be thoroughly aroused to the importance of liquidating the debt ... responded liberally, so that at the conclusion ... the debt was reduced by about £400.

**Celebrating
170 years
of worship
on this site**

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) 27 May – 3 June

NRW is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

The 2025 theme, Bridging Now to Next, reflects the ongoing connection between past, present and future.

Bridging Now to Next calls on all Australians to step forward together, to look ahead and continue the push forward as past lessons guide us.

In the NRW 2025 theme artwork created by Kalkadoon woman Bree Buttenshaw, native plants – which are known for regenerating after fire and thriving through adversity –

symbolise our collective strength and the possibilities of renewal. This is a time for growth, reflection, and commitment to walking together.

Australia's history of reconciliation is not a linear one, we have made great strides and experienced disappointing setbacks.

Twenty-five years ago, Corroboree 2000 brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous leaders in a historic call for reconciliation. We continue that work in 2025, inviting all Australians to join us in Bridging Now to Next – building a more united and respectful nation.



What is National Reconciliation Week?

The dates for NRW remain the same each year; 27 May to 3 June. These dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey – the successful 1967 referendum, and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.

Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward, creating a nation strengthened by respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and in playing our part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures.

A brief history

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) started as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993 (the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples) and was supported by Australia's major faith communities.

In 1996, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation launched Australia's first National Reconciliation Week.

In 2001, Reconciliation Australia was established to continue to provide national leadership on reconciliation.

In the same year, approximately 300,000 people walked across Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of National Reconciliation Week, and subsequently across bridges in cities and towns, to show their support for reconciliation.

Today, National Reconciliation Week is celebrated in workplaces, schools and early learning services, community organisations and groups, and by individuals Australia-wide.

Honouring our anger and grief

Adapted from an article by Father Richard Rohr – Centre for Action and Contemplation

There is an inherent connection between anger and grief that ultimately heals and liberates.

Over time, the Hebrew prophets came to see this connection between grief and anger. It was what converted them to a level of truth-telling. They first needed to get angry at injustices, oppression, and war. Anger can be deserved, and even virtuous, particularly when it motivates us to begin seeking necessary change. But only until sunset, Paul says (Ephesians 4:26). If we stay with our rage and resentment too long, we will righteously and unthinkingly pass on the hurt in ever new directions, and we injure our own souls in ways we don't even recognize.

As Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III puts it: We must learn to grieve prophetically, seeing our world, even at its darkest, with the spirit and energy of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible. Those ancient teachers warned that the world was out of balance

and that its repair requires our help. Grieving with them, we weep sometimes, yes, but without giving in to cynicism, hatred, and violence. We mourn as we work for change ... The challenge is to remember that answering insult with insult and harm with harm just worsens the situation for everyone. We must remember the words of Dr. King: "Darkness cannot put out darkness; only light can do that." When we grieve prophetically, we heal ourselves and the world by looking to shape the larger forces that damaged the soul of the person who caused hurt or anger, whether minor or devastating.

In this way, the realization that all things have tears, and most things deserve tears, might even be defined as a form of salvation from ourselves and from our illusions. The prophets knew and taught and modelled that anger must first be recognized, allowed – even loved! – as an expression of the deep, normally inaccessible sadness that each of us carries. Even Jesus "sobbed" over the whole city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41) and at the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:35). In his final "sadness ... and great distress" in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37), "his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44).

Resourcing and enabling mission

The Resource Reallocation Task Group thank all members of the congregation who participated in the table discussions at the AGM on Sunday 13th April. A full report will be presented to Church Council but we would like to give feed-back on question 1.

The question stated that “MUC is an active, welcoming Church because so many of its members are prepared to help in areas such as: Church Office, Church Council, Morning Tea, Worship, Maintenance, Live streaming, Friendship Group and Pastoral Care.”

We asked you to individually list these in order of importance to the life of the Church after you had shared your thoughts with others in your group.

After collating all the responses, the following list is how you rated them in order of importance. Worship, Pastoral Care, Church Council, Live Streaming, Church Office, Morning Tea, Maintenance and Friendship Group.

Thanks again to all who participated, we value your input greatly.

Akwak report



Akwak's 2024 aid for Syria was distributed in the first quarter of 2025 across IDP camps, baby clinics/hospitals and in an entire school of nearly 600 children, all bagged up in our signature packs. We also sent significant miscellaneous goods - clothes for all ages, toys and games, stationery items - for distribution. Our aid comprises comprehensive clothing packs (knits and bought items), baby packs for vulnerable infants, bag/blanket sets, and bountiful enrichment packs, each with toys, games, puzzles, sport items and stationery. We looked after nearly 1,800 children with our packs and with the miscellaneous contributions, around 2,300 people total. This scale of effort and contribution can only happen with and through an enormous team of people.

We have so many who support this effort shopping and donating; driving goods to packing stations; being drop-off locations; and an amazing crew who work so hard on the sorting and packing. It's a massive labour. Thank you to every single contributor and volunteer. We only exist because of you all.

We acknowledge with gratitude the many ways we are supported in our effort. The Morialta Uniting Church provide

us with rooms we can work from. It is generous and invaluable support for which we are very grateful. We also want to acknowledge the efforts of many Uniting Churches around the country who have craft groups supporting us, and Knit4Charities who have supported the Syrian children from the outset. We express our appreciation to Wrap With Love and Knit A Care Square for providing many beautiful blankets, Red Cross for lots of teddies and Men's Shed for crafting amazing wooden toys. Moving huge volumes of goods around the country is a massive job and we want to acknowledge Peter Wightman in Adelaide, Abu Mustafa in Sydney and Dawson's Haulage in Albury for their incredible support transporting our gear. Our appreciation also goes to Needle Nook Adelaide and to Able Packaging.

Finally, we thank the Australian Syrian Association (Victoria) for stewarding the container from Melbourne to Syria and organising all distributions with their partner NGO Rahma Humanitarian Foundation. It's not an easy job, but their work is world class, and we express our deep gratitude. Without them, none of this would be possible.



Eid Mubarak

Members of MUC were hosted by our Dawoodi Bohra friends at an Eid Breakfast on the Sunday that ended Ramadan.

The Dawoodi Bohras now call MUC their spiritual home as we journey together seeking our understanding of the Great Mystery we call God and Allah.



From saints to celebrities: Our evolution in admiration

Adapted from an article by Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI published in the Tea Tree Gully Parish Magazine (St David's Catholic Church)

When I was a young boy growing up in a Catholic community, the catechesis tried to inspire the hearts of the young with stories of martyrs, saints, and other people who lived virtuous and faithful lives. One story which inspired me, was about a third-century Christian martyr, St. Tarcisus, who was a twelve-year-old acolyte during the time of the early Christian persecutions. After celebrating the Eucharist in secret in the catacombs, a deacon or an acolyte would carry the Eucharistic species, the Blessed Sacrament, to the sick and to prisoners. One day young Tarcisus was carrying the Blessed Sacrament enroute to a prison when he was accosted by a mob. He refused to hand over the Blessed Sacrament, protected it with his own body, and was beaten to death as a result.

The story so inflamed my romantic imagination that I yearned for that kind of ideal in my life and that Tarcisus was the kind of hero that I wanted to be.



We've come a long way since then, both in our culture and in our churches. While we still make an official place for the Saints in our churches and our abstract ideals – many people are much more moved by the lives of the physically and intellectually gifted. They now inflame people's imaginations.

It's not that these celebrities are bad or that there's anything wrong with admiring them. Indeed, Thomas Aquinas once rightly pointed out that to withhold a compliment from someone who deserves it is a sin because we are withholding food that someone else needs to live on. Beauty, talent, and grace need to be recognized and acknowledged. Admiration is not the issue. Rather, the issue is that while we need to admire and acknowledge talent, grace, and beauty, these do not in themselves radiate virtue and saintliness.

One of the weaknesses in our churches today is that while we have healthier theological discussions, we struggle to touch hearts. We struggle to inflame their romantic imagination, as we once did by invoking the lives of the saints.

Can we find saints again who inflame our ideals? Can secular biographies of some moral giants in our own age inspire us? Can the life of a Dag Hammarskjöld become for us a moral and faith inspiration? Is there a new Therese of Lisieux out there? Today, more than ever, we need inspiring stories about women and men, young and old, who have lived out heroic virtue. We need moral exemplars, moral mentors.

Otherwise, we cheat ourselves by simplistically identifying human grace with moral virtue.



UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life

Annual Report 2023-24

Over 132,000 people were reached during the year through 34 projects with 23 partners from 13 countries.

The projects addressed poverty, gender equality, climate resilience, emergency responses and building back better. We can be very proud of the work done by Uniting World on our behalf.

"From small interventions like seeds and training, entire communities can reap the benefit of sustainable farming, one garden at a time."

Countries with Uniting World Projects include Zimbabwe (2), Turkey (1), India (5), Sri Lanka (1), Indonesia (4), Timor-Leste (4), Papua New Guinea (2), Solomon Islands (1), Vanuatu (1), Fiji (2), Tuvalu (1), Tonga (2), Kiribati (1) and the Pacific Region (7).

Almost 75% of the money raised goes to projects and the rest is used for fundraising, administration and accountability.

Thank you to all who have generously supported Uniting World Projects. You play a vital role in addressing the causes and consequences of poverty.



Turtles

A symbol of longevity, turtles survived extinction when the dinosaurs didn't. Some live up to 200 years, without appearing to age at all. How?!

By never rushing life and, at first sign of stress, heading into the quiet comfort of their custom mobile homes!

A long journey

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with petrol just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

"Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business!"

Amazing grace, or the terrible swift sword

Adapted from an article by Andrew Hamilton in Eureka Street

Combative qualities have come to be considered virtues in public life. They have included strength, decisiveness, acquisitiveness, power, aggression, contempt for the weak, and winning at all costs. On the losing side, the desirable qualities have included being up to the fight, resistance, telling it as it is, spiking enemy guns, enlisting for the long term, and passive aggression.



In such a world, there seems to be little room for gentle virtues, and particularly for grace and its associated qualities. These include the good qualities nostalgically associated with a traditional English public school education – graceful movement and speech, graciousness in conversation and in relationships with friends and strangers. Boys were taught to

be graceful in victory and gracious in defeat. Afterwards, of course, they went to far-off lands to despoil their people and make their own fortunes. Graceful manners can coexist with ruthless behaviour.

The word ‘grace’ has a Latin mother that also gave birth to the English word ‘gratitude’. Grace describes an undeserved gift, to which the appropriate response is to be thankful. Gracious words, gestures and manners evoke gratitude. Gratitude, in turn, may disarm competitiveness and suspicion and build peace.

In Western languages, the richness and subtleties of the words to do with grace reflect their Christian history. The central Christian belief in a God who loves us wildly, joined us in our human life, and accepted torture and death at human hands in order to save us, tells a story of God’s grace outrunning our human disgrace. The natural response of believers is gratitude and gracious living. Historically, of course, it hasn’t always been.

Even Christian debates about grace were often a jungle of disgraceful actions and weaponised words.

All that said, do you see any place for graciousness, grace and gratitude in our response to a world in which they have been devalued? If so, how might they shape our words and actions in an effective response?

Hot frogs and sizzling salamanders

Adapted from an article by Patrice Pottier, UNSW Sydney, published in the Conversation

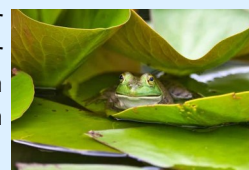
Frogs and other amphibians rely on the surrounding environment to regulate their body temperature. On hot days they might seek shade, water or cool spaces underground. But what if everywhere is too hot?

There is a limit to how much heat amphibians can tolerate. New research shows 2% of the world’s amphibians are already overheating. Even when they have access to shade and moisture, more than 100 species are struggling to maintain a viable body temperature. If global temperatures rise by 4°C, nearly 400 species (or 1 in 13 amphibians) could be pushed to their limits. Habitat loss, drought and disease will likely make even more amphibians vulnerable to heat stress.

The critical thermic maximum is the temperature beyond which an ectothermic (cold-blooded) species simply cannot function. At this temperature, they are incapacitated and unable to escape and will eventually die.

Local extinctions – where a species can no longer survive in a particular area – may occur if extreme heat events become too frequent. Amphibians often cannot just hop to cooler places. Many cannot relocate to different areas because they depend on specific wetlands, streams and ponds to breed and feed. If these habitats disappear or become too hot, some amphibians may have nowhere else to go.

Amphibians have been around for millions of years. They are part of our cultural heritage and play vital roles in balancing ecosystems. If we lose them they are gone forever.

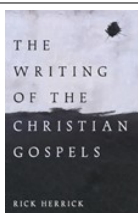


Book Review:

***The writing of the Christian gospels* by Rick Herrick**

Many Christians think of an evangelist with special knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus writing a gospel. Instead, Herrick demonstrates through careful research that the gospels came in parts, that each gospel is a collection of stories written by different authors which a talented editor wove together to create a gospel of Jesus.

This process of gospel creation is a fascinating story. The book is written as a text for an adult Sunday school class or for the general reader who is willing to entertain the idea that gospel creation was a very human process.



Review

“In his book, *The Writing of the Christian Gospels*, Rick Herrick takes us behind the scenes in the creation of the gospel stories. This well-researched book opens our eyes to the cultural, historical, and religious context from which the four evangelists tell their stories. Indeed, the writing of the gospels is a challenging process. As this book tells us, it’s a process that enlightens and deepens our faith journey.” - Jeffrey Frantz, author of *Rediscovering the Authentic Paul*

Rick Herrick has a PhD from Tulane University, is a former tenured university professor and magazine editor, and is the author of five published novels and six works of nonfiction. His musical play, *Lighthouse Point*, was performed as a fundraiser for the Martha’s Vineyard Museum in 2013.