



Kairos



News in and around

Camberwell Uniting Church

Volume 6 Number 4

December 2013

Minister's Musings

Grace and peace.



This is a time of many celebrations, events and year ending. Or alternately of missing people and sad reflection. Collectively, we've been building up a lot of hope over the last couple of weeks. We've listened to the prophets and believed them, in theory at least. It seems we are to put our faith where our mouth is and take the Good News from the exile in which it finds itself, as the Israelites found themselves in Babylon and let it return to where it belongs, somehow in the midst of the people. Somehow, mysteriously coming into reality.

It seems when you do that, all creation makes way for this promise being brought home: mountains crumble and deserts bloom. At least they recognise what is going on here. So Isaiah says. But for us, this story of the Nativity will remain in exile if we keep Jesus in a manger trapped in a stable surrounded by ox and ass and donkeys and shepherds and a whole lot of other irrelevancies.

What the story might do, if we free it from that exile of sentimental romance, is let it be what it really is: a story of transformation for the world, of love coming back into town, and when that happens, then perhaps mountains do shake, be they political mountains, social valleys or cultural landscapes. The effect of love leading the people home does that.

The really story of Incarnation is way past a

child being born. It is the return of the justice-maker, the political-antagonist, the conspirer with truth. No wonder the whole place quakes.

So let us allow ourselves to enjoy the stable story, but know it is not the main event of this season. This story is just the means to the truth. The actual truth, and the purpose of all this, is the return of God, the divine putting on human skin, into the streets of our neighbourhood and all neighbourhoods.

The love it takes for this to be done, the cost of this, the vulnerability of this is such that that which is corrupt, unjust, or causes fear and division, will be undone, will be transformed. It costs God to do this. Those things that rely on fear or hurt or power don't escape this incarnation event.

Fragile new beginnings like the one we celebrate are vulnerable in our world. They were before Jesus, they were in his story and they are in our story too. But new beginnings are real. God coming in flesh and blood does happen. Lives can embody this vulnerable hope.

Let's not just hope that it might happen in our neighbourhood, our church, our time. Let's expect this, even in us.

Warm Regards,

Rev'd Ian Brown

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

December 24 8.00 pm
Carols & Story

December 25 9.30 am
Family Christmas Celebration

Peace & good will to all!



Join us to celebrate the light of Christ born in our world.

Editor's Comment

The end of 2013 is arriving, and how quickly this year seems to have flown by. Again! Many good and positive works have been undertaken and initiatives put in place at Camberwell Uniting Church during the year under Ian's leadership, underpinned by strong and committed individuals and teams whose praises we cannot sing of highly enough.

Some amongst us have become grandparents in recent times, and it is most gratifying to know that we have the Messy Church program in place, whereby we have been able to see and hear young voices enjoying themselves with activities in a Christian context.

As is unfortunately the case within any community, the year has seen some of our families experience sadness and loss of loved ones, and while time can be a healer, these loved ones will be sorely missed around this year's Christmas Dinner table, and for every future family event.

We have also had a number of our Church friends suffer quite serious illnesses this year, and while their recovery to normality has taken much longer than expected, we hope and pray that their recuperation to good health continues.

The weekly pew sheet also notes the names of our people we think of and pray for the whole year. I am sure you know these friends and their families, for whom every day is struggle, and for whom the light seems to be dim, and at

the end of a long, long tunnel. They hold a special place in our hearts, and we aim, with our prayers, thoughts, visits and other acts of kindness and support, to do what we can to brighten that light.

I am most appreciative to those who have provided material for Kairos throughout the year. It has provided a rich source of varied perspectives on issues for the enjoyment of others.

A huge bouquet as a 'thank you' is owed to Carolyn Harris for all her out of hours work, and without whom you would probably not be reading and hopefully enjoying this final edition (and all others throughout the year) of Kairos for 2013.

Christmas Day is a special family day, and I trust that no one who is part of our Church family finds themselves spending it alone – 'family' is all-encompassing.

We wish you and your family a happy Christmas, and may God be with you as you enjoy the festive season.
Stuart Ensor

Holy Humour

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds.

After explaining the commandment to 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' she asked, 'Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?'

Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, 'Thou shall not kill.'

News from Church Council

Over the last three months we have seen the completion of several important projects. The major one is the internal refurbishment of the church which is now completed to the great satisfaction of the congregation and other organisations that use the space. The rear car park has been resurfaced, locks placed on the doors of the toilets behind the chapel, a contractor secured to mow the lawns at 'Illoura' and the guttering on the east side of the church is about to be replaced. The new chairs have all had rubber stoppers placed on their legs and our thanks go to Stuart for purchasing the stoppers and to both he and Ian for fitting them.

Since the painting of the church's interior is a large and costly task it has been decided to defer this at present and to just patch up the worst areas at the lower levels. Two more tables have been purchased for use at various functions and much good work was achieved at the recent Working Bee.

In our Issues Discussion segment, we have been fortunate to have Ian to explain details of the divestment process and how the debts which need to be met arose in the first instance.

At our last Council meeting, Ian provided a power point presentation, which clearly explained the work done by BOMAR in the sharing and distribution of the resources of the church. Sources of income were identified, areas of current concern outlined and work currently under development explained.

Max continues to provide detailed financial reports and at our November meeting presented a Draft Budget for 2014 which was discussed and approved. This will be circulated to the congregation on Sunday 8th December and discussed on Sunday 15th. We were delighted to receive a very generous bequest from the estate of Viti Rush and a letter expressing our gratitude has been sent to Viti's family.

The Children and Family Ministry has decided to run 11 sessions in 2014 (possibly on the 3rd week of each month) as well as a Christmas event. Fiona and Margery recently attended a 'Messy Theology' meeting where churches involved in the Messy Church program were able to share experiences. Thanks to a lot of work from Margery, the themes and activities of our Messy Church sessions are now available for viewing on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/camberwellmessychurch>

A flyer advertising the Celebration of the church refurbishment and the Moderator's visit has been prepared by Ian and distributed. The design for a board advertising our Christmas services has also been approved.

Presbytery met on Saturday 23rd November when Ian presented his power point explanation of the work of BOMAR. The meeting was also provided with an update on Uniting Our Futures, which included the suggestion that a Service of Lament be held for those congregations which are suffering loss as a result of the divestment program. The Presbytery Liaison group will meet again to discuss this. Sue Clarkson, who

is transferring from the specified ministry of youth worker to minister of the word, spoke to Presbytery about her experience as she is now ready for ordination.

Elaine Robinson

Messy Church

Since the last issue of Kairos there have been three "Messy Church" Sundays.

In **September**, the theme was "The wise person builds their house upon the rock".

The gathering activity was decorating a rock with nail polish and small "house". Then in the Hall, there was the busy building of all sorts of houses: stick houses; Lego houses; foam houses, etc. Anyone who successfully built a house was rewarded with a yellow builder's hat. The children also enjoyed painting a "cubby house" under the direction of Max. They did a great job. Last, but not least, there was the making of "Rocky Road" – the chocolate type. In the celebration time, Ian performed an experiment –in the courtyard- with a house built on rock and one built on sand. He turned the hose on them and we soon realized that the house on sand would not last.



Back in the church everyone watched a video clip of the wise builder parable. Ruth and her helpers prepared us all a meal of tacos and salad; followed by plenty of "rocky road".

This month the Children's and Family Pastor from St Hilary's visited! They too run a Messy Church and she was keen to see another one in action.

In **October**, the Messy Church theme was based on the Old Testament story of Daniel (in the lions' den). The gathering activity was making chains with Margery - which showed

when Daniel was imprisoned for telling the people about God. We then went to Babylon where we saw the lions' den where Daniel was thrown and heard the lion's roar from under the stage in the hall-helped by Ian.

Carolyn helped people make angels because an angel appeared to Daniel in the lion's den and he helped him escape. Margaret helped people paint lion face prints and paw prints. Ruth and Owen had lion faces to make out of sponge pieces and then people could make clay lions and paint them. Emeline showed people how to make Daniel on a pencil and Sam had biscuits (made by Alex) to decorate with lion paw prints. Max showed people how to make badges with lions on them amongst other pictures. Elaine took wonderful photos which everyone enjoyed seeing on the screen in church!



In the Celebration we sang "My God is so big" and a song about Daniel which Ian had written some time ago, to the tune of "Lord of the Dance". Fiona told the story of how Daniel was thrown into the lions' den in Babylon and saved by his trust in God. Ian highlighted our need to trust in God in the difficult times and the good times, in his Reflection and after some responsive prayers we went for the meal.

Ruth and her helpers prepared baked potatoes with vegetarian toppings or ham if one fancied some meat. This was followed by the decorated biscuits.

The final Messy Church for the year, held in December, was the **Christmas Messy Church**.

Advent calendars and a Nativity scene with a real baby in a stable built by Ian and Margery were just the start of our very Messy Christmas!!!

15 children enjoyed wonderful clay star or angel decorations to paint, Christmas door hangers, making paper chains for our Christmas tree,

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and decorating Tic Toc biscuits to complete the Christmas story. In the celebration we had a play about a person shopping for parts of the Nativity scene. They only ended up with a baby Jesus - all other items came in many different types so choice was too hard - and they realized that there was only one Jesus and he was the most important part of the scene! We heard the story of the Christmas Star and Ian continued on the theme of what Christmas is really about and that is the gift of love to us from God in the baby Jesus. We then had a barbeque and Christmas treats for tea.



This was a joyous finish to our second year of Messy Church!

We have now run 21 Messy Churches and each one has had its own surprises and successes.

Thanks to all who have contributed, participated and assisted, including those who pitch in with preparation, those who slave away in the backroom and the kitchen, and those who tidy up afterwards.

Margery and Fiona

News from CASS

At our October meeting, Paul Boyd, the Co-ordinator of the Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre Lentara, described the work he was currently involved with – helping the Adult and Families Program in Carlton to transition from Lentara to the care of the Red Cross. Paul also co-ordinates the program at the Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre in Brunswick which has been running for about 10 years. Now that Lentara has withdrawn from the Commonwealth Government funded programs, it is concentrating on this Community Program which provides housing and



caseworkers for other asylum seekers, those who arrived in Australia with valid visas.

The Community Program has 4 part time staff and between 30 - 40 volunteers. It involves about 55 people in 15 houses and these people use the ASWC as a combination drop-in centre, and a place to participate in programs to improve their English and Computer competence. The ASWC is a gathering place for mainly adult males aged 25 – 45 who have come from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The numbers using the Centre have increased over the last 18 months as more bridging visas have been granted. The AWC is seen as a space where people feel safe and can make important contacts.

In October there were 10,000 people on bridging visas in Australia – 7,000 in Melbourne. Under the Coalition government, it looks increasingly likely that bridging visas will be converted into temporary protection visas which most probably will not include the right to work. It could take up to three years for holders of TPVs have their claims processed. After this time they will need to reapply for another TPV. Under the new government it is also possible that some systems, such as case work support, will be taken away. Most people in detention do have medical care made available, but family reunions will become more difficult, if not impossible. The majority of people arriving at present are from Iran (mostly single males aged 25 – 45), Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

Foundation House, which has centres in Brunswick, Ringwood and Dandenong (and other suburbs) provides counselling for people who have experienced torture and trauma.

Our major fund raising effort for the year was an organ concert featuring Thomas Heywood, which was held on Sunday 13th October. The afternoon raised over \$1050 - \$300 from the concert and the rest from High Tea and the subsequent sale of cakes and biscuits. Special thanks were passed on to Margaret Watters, Eril Deighton, Alex Stewart and Carolyn Harris for their splendid organisation of a very classy High Tea. Also Louisa (of Lulabelles) generously donated a significant number of most impressive cupcakes.

Maintenance at 'Illoura' is an ongoing item. In the past couple of months -

- The carpet covering the laundry floor has been removed and the floor has been levelled and sealed, thus minimising damage from further leaks

from the washing machine. Carpet in the adjacent room has been dried out.

- The bee swarm at the front door was attended to by Betty the Bee Keeper.
- The staircase bannister which had separated from the wall has been repaired by Harvey Sowerby and Eric McKay.
- The problems with the heating/air conditioning are still being followed up with Daiken and Auscool.
- Now that Red Cross has taken over from Lentara, we are trying to arrange a meeting with representatives from the Red Cross, Life Without Barriers and Camberwell Uniting Church as the landlord.

Our final fundraising for 2013 has taken place throughout November. As in previous years, we have been collecting gift vouchers for Lentara's Christmas party. These, when supplemented by gift voucher gifts from the Women of CUC, will be delivered in December along with our ongoing donations of food and household items which are always greatly appreciated.

It is also intended to invite the residents of 'Illoura' to share in our Christmas Eve service on 24th December.

Thank you all once again for the generosity you have shown throughout the year. Now that Lentara has withdrawn from the Commonwealth Government funded Community Detention Program, it is reliant more than ever on the sorts of donations we are able to provide.
Elaine Robinson

Church Interior Configuration Project

After due consideration and discussion, a decision was taken by the congregation earlier this year to re-model the interior layout of the Church. The plan involved relocating the choir stalls and the organ to the front left hand side, reconfiguring the three rows of pews with two aisles to make a central aisle flanked by two angled rows of pews supplemented by individual chairs.

The philosophy behind the decision was to make a more inclusive and cohesive blend between the choir, the congregation and the Minister, with a view to enhancing the Sunday service experience and the functionality and ambience of the space for ourselves and other users.



Implementation of the plan would involve extensive electrical work to re-wire the organ and associated lighting, upgrade the antiquated main switchboard and consolidate interior light switches, install new lighting and wiring to accommodate the overhead projector, computer and screen. A new sound desk was also to be constructed, using material from the former choir stall side walls.

It was also to require disconnection and removal of the old electrical heating rails beneath the pews, removal of the hearing facilities along the left wall, lengthening some smaller pews to ensure consistency up the aisle, and replacement of any damaged floorboards.

Once the Church was emptied of pews, the floor was to be stained and polished. The pews (existing and newly extended) were to be sited in their new configuration.



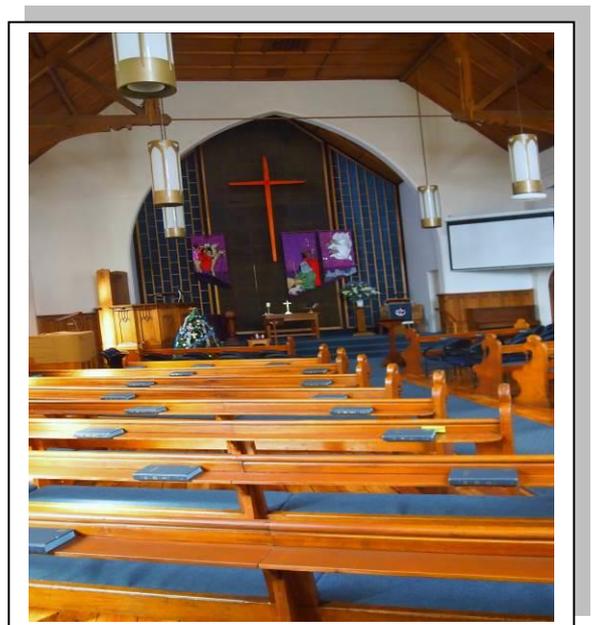
At the same time, extensive work would be required to repair and re-lay the carpet which had been removed to accommodate the revised

seating plan, and the larger open space at the rear of the Church.

Simple. Almost. Mindful of horror stories of other renovations, the reconfiguration implementation had few major hiccups – if we are allowed to call the difficulty in obtaining replacement floorboards of the correct thickness, coming just short of enough matching carpet to cover all the additional floor space, difficulty of matching the old stain on the extended pews at the seam, and discovery of some structural water damage issues as ‘not major’.

Overall, the response from our church community and others who use the facility has been overwhelmingly positive. Some tweaking with the siting of the organ was necessary, (and some more work may need to be done with the pipes, but that is another issue), however, visually and aesthetically the new layout has been viewed as successful and has met its intended aims and intentions.

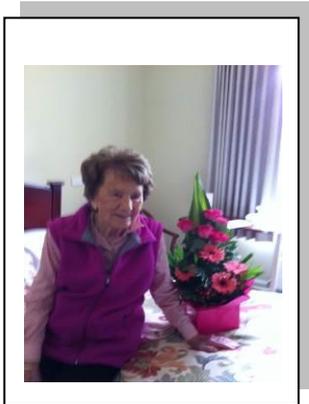
The builders and other tradesmen are to be commended for their care and respect they showed towards our Church property, and for the way they tackled their work to meet the timelines we set, and around the ongoing and special commitments in the Church which were able to go ahead with minor, temporary and in some cases no disruption. Funds are now being raised to finalise refurbishment of the Church interior.



Ruby Lawton

It was a sad day for the Lawton family and the Camberwell Uniting Church when news came through that Ruby Lawton died on 1 October 2013. It was the end of an era, the changing of the generational guard, and the passing of a stalwart of our Church. Her family spoke at her funeral of a woman/wife/mother/grandmother/great grandmother who was much loved, with a strong Christian ethic, community spirit and a compassionate heart. With the kind permission of her family, Kairos is pleased to be able to reproduce excerpts from the family tributes to Ruby, below.

Ruby Lawton (nee Moon) was born on 8 October 1919 and died a week before her 94th birthday. She grew up in Footscray, and after visiting friends in Camberwell, her family decided it was a nice place to live, and they moved here when Ruby was 15 or 16.



On leaving school, Ruby attended Stott's Business College, and subsequently found employment at the Camberwell Town Hall, which she had to leave when she got married.

Ruby's parents were staunch Methodists and quickly became involved in the Camberwell Methodist Church. Ruby joined the choir, and this is where she caught Roy's eye. They courted for 7 years, got married and had three children, Allan, Graham and Jewell. The Church was very important in shaping Ruby and Roy's life, and they passed its associated moral and ethical values onto their children.

Ruby started coming to this Church in 1935 and has taken part in all aspects of it. Aside from the choir, she was involved in the Sunday School, Sunday School concerts, Church camps, was an Elder, a member of the Adult Group, and always volunteered for activities including KUCA and the coffee shop.

In Allan's view, some of the words best to describe Ruby would be selfless, thoughtful, generous and friendly. She always thought of others first. She never wanted a fuss about herself but wanted a fuss made of others as she

got more pleasure from watching others' enjoyment. She was very proud of her children and grandchildren and of their achievements.

Ruby was a friendly person and always made people welcome, whether at Church or in her local community. She was generous also with her compliments, and liked to make people feel good about themselves. At the same time it was acknowledged that she was a forceful personality and had a bit of a temper. There were however, many instances mentioned when her strong personality was put to good use, and everyone benefitted.

The family memories of Ruby also included many fun birthday parties, excited Christmas mornings, holidaying in the caravan with Roy, kids and friends, and shopping 'til you drop. Ruby always thought appearance was important, and she never let her standard fall throughout her whole life.

A good life, well lived, and a great Mum.
Vale Ruby

GIVE HOPE THIS CHRISTMAS ACT FOR PEACE CHRISTMAS BOWL 2013

\$50 can provide books, pens, pencils and a backpack for 10 Afghan school girls to help them get an education.

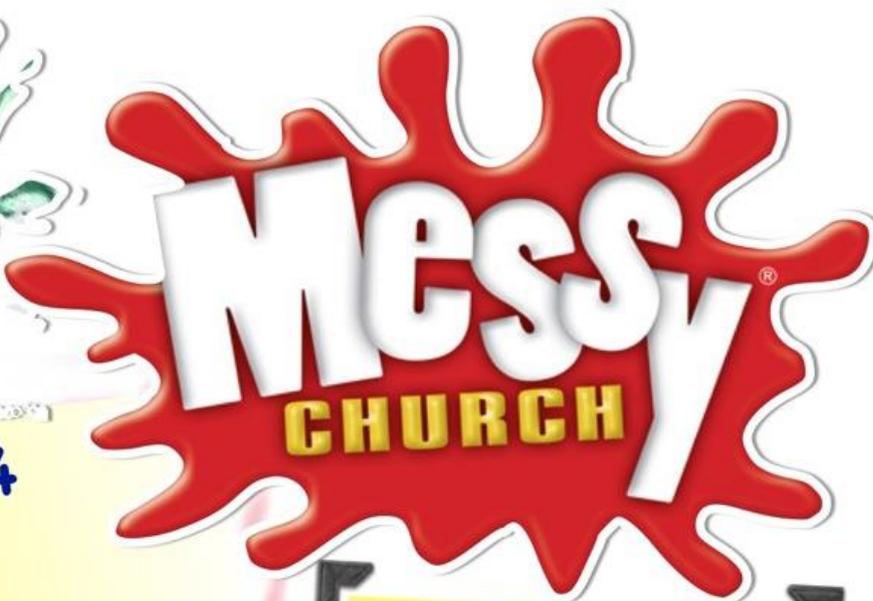
\$200 can provide seeds to 150 Zimbabwean families so they can grow their own vegetables.

\$600 can provide food for a year to a family living in a refugee camp on the Thailand-Myanmar border.

Kairos is the Greek word meaning "time", that is, those times which are turning points demanding decision while the opportunity remains. Although it refers primarily to the coming of Christ it may also refer to the present time in the life of our congregation.

Editor: Stuart Ensor

Ministry: Worship 10.00 am
Rev. Ian Brown 0439 931 080
Church Office: Tuesday & Friday
Phone 9882-7441
Email ucacamberwell@uniting.com.au



DATES 2014

SUNDAY 4-6pm

FEB 16 DAVID & GOLIATH

MAR 16 PETER THE FISHERMAN

APR 13 EASTER

MAY 18 KING SOLOMON

JUN 15 JOHN THE BAPTIST

JUL 20 TREASURE HUNT

AUG 17 "ABE'S BOYS"

SEP 21 THE HUGE PICNIC

OCT 19 THE TEN LEPERS

NOV 16 JONAH

DEC 14 CHRISTMAS

**Camberwell
Uniting Church
314 Camberwell Rd**

Come & explore these "messy" stories through craft, activities, music & celebration followed by a simple meal.

**ALL
AGES
WELCOME!**



www.facebook.com/camberwellmessychurch

