



Kairos



News in and around Camberwell Uniting Church

Volume 11 Number 1

Minister's Musings

Warm greetings to all. This month Christians around the world began the season of Lent. By a quirk of the calendar in 2018, Ash Wednesday is Valentine's Day, February 14 and Easter falls on April Fools' Day.

In Flannery O'Connor's short story *Revelation*, the character Mrs Turpin is a decent woman who did everything right — except that she was a racist. She was blinded to this ugly reality by self-righteousness. She was a person, writes O'Connor, who when she entered heaven needed "even her virtues burned away."

The ashes of Ash Wednesday aren't to mark our burning, but they do represent the earthy reality that we come from dust and ashes and to them we will return. It's an ancient practice and not entirely unique to Christians. Many faiths feature a practice of dealing with the parts of our nature or our actions that we are better off without. Processing regrets, dealing with our darker side, formalizing our repentance, cleansing are all part of it.



Receiving ashes in Papua New Guinea.

Daniel Clendenin explores the Jewish tradition when he writes, 'our forebears have an ancient ritual to address this. It's called Kol Nidre — in Aramaic, meaning "all vows." The Kol Nidre is a

declaration that is recited at the beginning of the service on the eve of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The service begins with a prayer: "In the tribunal of heaven and the tribunal of earth, by the permission of God — blessed be He — and by the permission of this holy congregation, we hold it lawful to pray with the transgressors." That is, we gladly take our place among the sinners rather than the saintly. The prayer begins with the first two words "Kol Nidre."

"All vows, obligations, oaths, and anathemas, whether called 'konas,' or by any other name, which we may vow, or swear, or pledge, or whereby we may be bound, from this Day of Atonement until the next (whose happy coming we await), we do repent. May they be deemed absolved, forgiven, annulled, and void, and made of no effect; they shall not bind us nor have power over us."

The leader and the congregation respond by quoting Numbers 15:26: "And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourns among them, seeing all the people were in ignorance."

The idea behind Kol Nidre is that however well-intended, we break our promises, even to God. And all our broken promises can become a horrible burden. So we need forgiveness for "all vows" of righteousness, for efforts to earn the love of God. We are forgiven for misplaced zeal, however earnest.

In his book, *In God's Shadow*, Michael Walzer observes that Israel began with two related covenants — one with Abraham based on kinship, family, and birthright as a chosen people, and another with Moses based upon a legal covenant, a nation, and law. In the letter to the Romans, Paul repudiates both of these appeals for divine favor.

Counting how many times a word occurs in the Bible can be misleading. But Romans 4 is sharply clear. At least 10 times Paul uses the word "credit" to describe our relationship with God. A credit is a free gift; it's the opposite of a wage that is paid for work or an obligation that is earned.

No one can curry God's favor by keeping the Mosaic law, by claiming kinship with Abraham, or by any other well-intentioned vow — like those we make for Lent.

But everyone can receive a free gift — even Gentiles, says Paul, who are not of Abrahamic ancestry and who are ignorant of the Mosaic law. All the promises of God's free love come to us "by faith," says Paul. Faith, said Luther, is the beggar's empty hand that can do nothing except receive a gift with gratitude. So, thank God for this corrective and healing reminder. It gives a fitting beginning to Lent and the journey towards Easter.

Scott Cairns ponders the implications of the season and these ancient rituals in a poem called Kol Nidre.

"Good to reconsider, and then to disavow whatever mitigations one has let usurp, eclipse, or glibly water down whatever good he may have thought to offer.

Some untoward something will often sprout from any swollen hull thus sown.

The unforeseen is guaranteed to flourish well beyond the harried terms of any vow expressed from one's more narrow sense or solitary will.

Good therefore to have another go at what might prove of use beyond one's dim intention, no?

Good thereafter to unsay, recant what harm has billowed, subsequent, from ill-considered promise. Good that one prepare ever to repent."

Lenten disciplines can serve a positive purpose, especially in our culture of indulgence and entitlement. What might you and I 'have another go at' in this season? Not to be stuck in guilt and mire, but to be freed from them. So, in the spirit of Kol Nidre, this Lent I'll do what I can to turn away from regular structures of practice — of belief and habit. And I'll work at turning towards God, who promises to "credit" me with the free gift of love.

Ian

P.S. — an Easter-ish poem in this vein.
Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front

Love the quick profit, the annual raise,
vacation with pay. Want more

March 2018

of everything ready-made. Be afraid
to know your neighbors and to die.

And you will have a window in your head.
Not even your future will be a mystery
any more. Your mind will be punched in a card
and shut away in a little drawer.

When they want you to buy something
they will call you. When they want you
to die for profit they will let you know.
So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.

Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.
Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.

Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millenium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.

Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophesy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.

Listen to carrion — put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.
So long as women do not go cheap
for power, please women more than men.

Ask yourself: Will this satisfy
a woman satisfied to bear a child?
Will this disturb the sleep
of a woman near to giving birth?

Go with your love to the fields.
Lie down in the shade. Rest your head
in her lap. Swear allegiance
to what is nighest your thoughts.

As soon as the generals and the politicians
can predict the motions of your mind,
lose it. Leave it as a sign
to mark the false trail, the way
you didn't go.

Be like the fox who makes more tracks than
necessary, some in the wrong direction.
Practice resurrection. Wendell Berry (born 1934)

From the editor

Hello, and welcome to the first edition of Kairos for 2018. This edition is slightly earlier than usual due to the timing of Easter this year.

In this edition we pay special tribute to three people who no longer will take up their regular positions in Church on Sundays – two who have made significant contributions over a long period to our Camberwell Church in different ways, and one who as a family man, a churchman within the Uniting Church, as well as a member of our congregation has left a positive, indelible impression.

The departure of these friends brought home to me the value of the quiet, background work done by a group of devoted, caring people in our congregation who make up our Pastoral Care Team.

I think that we would consider our congregation to be a warm, welcoming and accepting congregation, in which we encourage members to build relationships of mutual care. Our Pastoral Care Team was established (responsible to the Church Council) to ensure we remain a caring community with a strong network of support for the congregation wholly and individually.

As I understand it, our Pastoral Care Team is comprised of all our Elders, our Minister, and several visitors. The core role of the Team is to monitor the welfare of congregation members and build up the congregation in faith, hope and love. In practical terms this means meeting every two months to share the concerns of congregation members and respond to any needs accordingly. In particular the group maintains an awareness of those who are ill or in other need, and helps organise visiting and practical support for our friends in need.

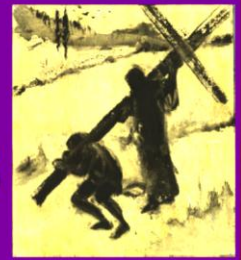
The need for, and the value of this group has never more evident as in recent times. We are a family, and at the heart of every family is love. Our love of God and for each other brings us together. It makes good times sweeter and helps us through the tough ones. There is the comfort of knowing that you are surrounded by people who love you, people who care for you. The people who make up our Pastoral Care Team do exactly that. Thank you so much.

Rounding out this edition are reports regarding the activities of some of the groups that make up the fabric and life of our Church, and some items, hopefully of interest and entertainment. Thanks as usual to all who have contributed.

I trust you enjoy this edition of Kairos. **Ed**

March 2018

Easter Services



Celebrate with us

Messy Church Easter:
- March 18: 4-6 pm

Palm Sunday Procession:
- March 25: 10 am - OLV garden

Maundy Thursday:
- March 29: Lord's Supper 7:30 pm

Good Friday:
- 9:45 am service & 11:15 am Ecumenical witness walk - meet here

Easter Day: April 1: 10 am
- joyful celebration

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Margaret Ailsa Ritchie

21 March 1935 – 5 December 2017

Known to all at Camberwell Uniting as “Marg Ritchie”, Margaret died somewhat unexpectedly on the evening of Tuesday 5 December 2017.

Margaret was born on 21st March 1935 at St Georges Kew to William (Bill) and Gwendolyn Ritchie. So a good life, lived to the full for over 82 years.

At the Memorial Service of Thanksgiving for her life, two of Marg's nephews and one friend spoke. The following words are taken from the tribute paid to Marg by her nephew, Mike Ritchie.

“To her family, Marg was:

- Younger sister of Graham;
- Sister in law of Anne;
- Aunt to David, Michael, Barrie, Wendy and Peter and their partners; and
- Great Aunt to Claire, Steven, Lindsay, Laura, Mark, Kayce and Liesel.



These are the bare facts of Margaret's life but we all know there is much more, her friendships, her faith and the other elements of her full life. The story below is taken purely from our

perspective of her as a family member.”

The “family’s enduring memory of Margaret was of a strong minded, honest, tough, independent woman who:

- forged a successful career in nursing and microbiology;
- cared for her parents;
- was actively involved in her Church; and
- continually fed her travel bug throughout her life.

This picture will emerge as we discuss Margaret’s life.

Margaret attended Canterbury Primary School before being educated at Presbyterian Ladies College where she was appointed as House Captain of Rosslyn, Vice-Captain of the Softball team and as a Prefect.

Margaret grew up at family home at 90 Wattle Valley Road, Canterbury where she developed her faith and interest at the local Church” (initially Trinity Presbyterian Church, Camberwell, subsequently transferring to Camberwell Uniting Church at the time of Union).

“Following her secondary education, Margaret successfully trained as nurse in Melbourne before embarking by boat to England to further her career while also exploring Britain and Europe. She remained in London for a number of years before returning to Melbourne where she subsequently embarked on a new career in microbiology. Again, Margaret not surprisingly proved very successful and she retired as the Head of the Microbiology Unit at the Royal Children’s Hospital.

During her career she continued to travel, often in groups but also alone, across the globe, ensuring she visited every continent at least once. Two examples stand out: firstly when she visited Cambodia during the Vietnam War, and her first trip to China once permission was granted.

We were continually impressed with her enthusiasm for travel and her tales from around the world, as she always had either come back from a trip or was planning another one. Her experiences also informed her view of the world and she actively supported a number of charities focused on improving the lives of individuals and communities. These included World Vision, Fairtrade and the cause of the Palestinians. I think we all remember carefully cutting out the stamps on all letters received for the regular handing over to Margaret of a box of stamps for her charity.

Margaret’s commitment to her faith and the local church ran deep, with her appointment as Church Elder extending for more than 40 years, being a member of the choir and an active supporter and leader of the children’s creative programs operated by the Camberwell Uniting Church.

Margaret had a winning smile, she enjoyed a drink and loved being actively involved in family functions and she was always first on with the party hats. She would also produce some wonderful but sometime strange Christmas gifts for the family, which normally had a story behind them as to the specific link to the recipient.

Margaret was also interested in card games, cross words, Sudoku and was active in Probus, and until recently a regular swimmer. As some or most of us know she was always actively interested in life in general and keeping busy (even at the expense of house and car cleaning).

While she was strong in providing support for the Church with documents and minutes, she was not strong on the new Internet thing, so often we got a call for Steven to come over and help out with her internet connection and restoring her seemingly lost programs (Solitaire), some programs that Graham downloaded for her, or Church documents. Steven had to work his way through the various piles of paper and boxes to get to the computer and track all the cords to ensure everything remained connected before working through the range of issues with her computer.

Marg was a strong supporter of her nephews and niece, including providing accommodation assistance in Melbourne for those who required help when they transferred from the country to Melbourne for work or studies. The Wattle Valley Road house was home to David, Barrie and Peter at various stages. I am sure that they have many happy memories of those days. These including bonding with Barrie over Dirty Harry movies, and with Peter over an 8 hour Nicholas Nickleby show at the MTC.

Barrie fondly recalls the Dirty Harry movie sessions, as when he arrived home one night he noticed the video player was missing. He assumed Margaret has taken it to work and was going to stir her up about Dirty Harry being good but not that good that you had to watch them at work. However, when Margaret got home they realised the house had been burgled and Margaret also identified that a piece of jewellery was missing. Some months later after having lodged the insurance claim and replaced the video player and jewellery, surprise, surprise Margaret found the missing jewellery (misplaced

not stolen). With Margaret's honesty there was no way she was not telling the insurance company. Also not surprisingly, the insurance company had never had a client come in to advise them of a mistake in the company's favour. The company did not have procedures in place to deal with this situation, so Margaret offered to pay for the replacement jewellery. It took the insurance company a number of days to consider the position, and then they wrote back to Margaret thanking her for her honesty and agreeing for her to repay a contribution to the cost of the new jewellery.

I also appreciated her wit and wisdom in 1976 when I was attending a summer school at Melbourne University for two weeks. Towards the end of the stay, I and others were cleaning up the common room including removing the empty beer bottles when I heard a familiar voice cry out "Young Ritchie emptying the Dead Marines I see". To her credit Margaret did not criticise or make a fuss in front of the group - she wanted to know if I was all right as I was sixteen and in Melbourne on my own for the first time.

Margaret was, as evidenced, above a strong willed person, committed to her career, family, travel, church and faith, and constantly challenging the status quo to make the world better.

Margaret, we thank you for being part of our lives and contributing to our education and broader understanding of the world. On behalf of the family we acknowledge all of the above and thank you.

Rest well and peacefully.
(With appreciation to **Mike Ritchie**, who made his eulogy available for all of us to read and reflect in our own time on the life of his Aunt and our long time friend).

Laurie Turner



"Men of genius are admired; men of wealth are envied; men of power are feared; but only men of character are trusted". The author of this quote is unknown, but he surely knew Dad.

'The Age and 'The Sun' newspapers of Wednesday 24 January 2018 carried the sad news of the death of the Reverend Laurie Turner at the age of 94 years.

At his funeral at Camberwell Uniting Church on Tuesday 30 January, the church was overflowing – it is estimated that some 200 people attended. Over 150 stayed for afternoon tea afterwards, straining our human and physical resources to the limit! A quite extraordinary turnout, I think, but a true reflection of the esteem in which Laurie was held, and the positive influence he had on so many lives.

To his family this turnout was not a surprise, as reflected in the words which were spoken in his memory. His family eulogy, spoken by his daughter Jenny, is re-printed below (with her kind permission), for those who were unable to attend, for those who wish to read again at their own pace, and for those who simply wish to recall memories of a remarkable 'ordinary' gentleman.

"Dad was a man of great humility and in the last couple of years he finally talked a little about his army experience in PNG. Against his father's better judgment, he joined up aged 18. With his skills in typing and banking he served in the PNG pay office and he described the Japanese planes flying overhead every night. He slept with a rifle under his pillow, and in his own words confessed, "I was too young". After a medical discharge he heard whispers in streets and churches, "What's that boy doing wearing an RSL badge?"

It always puzzled me that he hadn't collected his war medals and he responded, "I didn't feel I'd earned them." So sad. No 18 year old should ever have to sleep with a rifle under his pillow, and all deserved their medals whatever the length of duty. Last October Dad agreed to apply for them, and this has been approved but sadly he didn't get to see them. They will however, remain in the family with great pride.

Humble, maybe, but not meek, in 2000 he proudly accepted an OAM for services to the Uniting Church as a minister and administrator, and often said with a degree of puzzlement, "I've had a most remarkable ministry for an ordinary bloke."

Dad was always a man of deep gratitude. In 2006 he wrote his life story for the UC Historical Society, calling it "One Ordinary Person's Pilgrimage". After reading it I told him that he wrote too humbly, to which he replied, "How could I not? I have much to be humble about. I'm not lucky, I'm blessed."

As the years passed and we took shorter excursions out, after just a café lunch and short drive he would give thanks “for the most marvellous day”.

Sharon Hollis has given a great account of Dad’s professional life, and in the many documents recording his work, similar attributes are mentioned consistently: astute judgment, profound understanding of people, capacity to encourage others, grace of manner, quick-fire reference system on church law, and possessing all the marks of a true pastor: including accepting, forgiving, tolerant, slow to anger and the ability to undertake steep learning curves.

Like his generation, he witnessed the relentless trajectory of technology, but Dad being Dad, he took things slowly. The purchase of his first computer was a huge decision, but until recently he could (for the most part) deftly manage two remote controls and the iPad he received for his 90th birthday.

Like most fathers of daughters, he was dragged along reluctantly. As Mum pinned the hem of my first teenage-style dress he asked if it wasn’t just a little too short, dear? Mum kept pinning, and Dad let go a little more.

Despite the responsibility and sometimes gravity of the work he did, Dad had the ability to laugh and not take himself too seriously. His first formal appointment to Chelsea Methodist Church lasted just 18 days and he liked to tell that story without adding that the Conference needed to shuffle some ministers around. When making pastoral visits he always felt he had gained full acceptance when invited to have a cup of tea in the kitchen and not the lounge room. And anyone who can barrack for North Melbourne for 70+ years with just four premierships has to have a sense of humour!

Through all the pressures of ministry he never wavered in his belief in the Grace of God, in confidence in his faith, or his call to ministry. In PNG he met an American army padre who encouraged him to join the ministry – so maybe God’s plan for Dad was evident even in the theatre of a war he wasn’t ready for?

Dad had a deep Biblical knowledge combined with the unique ability to convey the message simply. I recall a sermon about the song, Que Sera Sera - what will be will be. He did not agree with the sentiment - God might have our backs, but we had to do the work.

But to Peter, Susan and I, Laurie Turner was just Dad. Watching Peter play football, he barracked loudly. But at our netball court he was regularly disciplined sternly by the umpires for sideline

coaching offences. Susan recalls the irony of Dad being the “responsible adult” at the swimming pool with her boys – they swam like dolphins and Dad couldn’t swim at all! However, he did play tenacious games of pool and table tennis.

There was a tennis era, and there was a fairly short period when he trialled having a day off to play golf, but he never did master the whole day-off thing! Dad treated everyone with respect, none more so that the men we called “Dad’s friends”. The itinerant, homeless, sometimes alcoholics who knocked on the door of a manse asking for help, and one year we shared Christmas lunch with one of them. Dad also loved an ice-cream – there were Sunday afternoon drives with an ice-cream stop, and he ate one of his favourite Drumsticks the day he died.

Above all his achievements he was just so proud of his family, his growing family, their achievements large and small, their hopes, studies, careers, relationships and travels. He was especially proud to marry the three of us and baptise all nine grandchildren. And in recent years you could see the pride on his face when he could claim the most great-grandchildren (11) in a group discussion!

In the last five years we have been grateful for people’s support, love and care of Dad. Hedley Sutton not only took care of him, they took him into their hearts. Frank Mason and his band of “Grumpy Old Men” took Dad to coffee most Tuesday afternoons, and Sunday mornings he worshipped in this church. These two regular activities were the highlights of his week, and Peter, Susan and I thank you for your loving pastoral care of him.

Dad was ready to go. He missed Mum more every day and had been without her for 14 years. As his world and interests shrank I expected my lasting image of him would come from younger, more vital years. But most of all I will miss walking through his Hedley Sutton door, seeing him in his big, green chair, and his face light up with such joy and love and being welcomed in by name.

Today of all days, Dad can have the final word. In the closing of his “One Ordinary Person’s Pilgrimage” he declared:

“Best of all God is with us so that we have the faith to know that the best is yet to be. Thanks be to God.”

With appreciation to **Jenny Oliver** for supplying CUC with a copy of the family eulogy.

Camberwell Uniting Church Netball Club

Did you know that we had a Camberwell Uniting Church Netball Club? Our colours were light and navy blue with red tops, as you will see in the photos.



I founded it in 1981, starting with one senior and two junior teams. It lasted about 8 years, and we won a junior and senior premiership.



The youngest player was eight years old and many did not know the rules. It was great fun and several present members of the congregation will remember watching and helping our club.

My sister Dorothy Gordon and her three daughters helped coach and umpire to get us started.

As I was Vice Principal at Camberwell Primary, it was easy to negotiate court use for practice and matches. Several members of staff (teachers and secretary) joined the club with their daughters and helped on the committee.

Our first president was Loris Green - wife of Rev. Kevin Green - our Minister. Their daughter Katie played as a shooter with the added advantage of being able to practice next door (the minister then lived in the manse beside the church - now Illoura).

Doreen Ellis, a lay preacher (who had coached me in the Victorian Methodist State team), umpired and coached one team, as she had now joined Camberwell Uniting Church. When Rev. Barry Prior became our minister he was much

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involved as a qualified umpire, coach and enthusiastic committee member. Jo, his wife, was our president, and their two girls Jill and Kathy also played.

Some of the players and parents are still linked to the church - Marion Champion (daughter Fiona), Judy Savige (her daughters Fiona and Kate), June Strickland (daughter Belinda), and Elizabeth McKay (daughter Catherine).

I was still playing and had the pleasure to have Barry umpire me in our senior team. He was an excellent umpire and unbiased. After he left us and went to minister in Hong Kong, he umpired for international matches.

The early days required very basic teaching and I remember the youngest team cheering when, after several matches, they actually scored a goal. They asked me if they had won !!!

We were affiliated with Victorian Churches Netball Association that grew from the Methodist Basketball Association. (Basketball was the former name of netball - same game with 7 players).

In former years:

Judy Savige and I played in the Victorian Methodist Basketball Association in opposing teams; Judy played for Box Hill Methodist, and was an excellent shooter; I played with my four sisters for the church in which we were members at the time - South Melbourne, West Brunswick and Ringwood; and I had the privilege to be captain, and then coach of our senior Methodist interstate team. I was subsequently made a life member of the club.

I would be interested to see who you can recognize in the photos.....

Ruth Akie

.....

Language is a serious business!

- The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
- She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.
- No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
- A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
- A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
- The short fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- The man who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
- A backward poet writes inverse.

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'Flipping for a cause' Pancake Day – Thank you to Fiona & Stuart for organising, cooking & presenting our delicious pancake morning tea (also at Messy Church). We all enjoyed the tasty pancakes. The gold coin donations to help Uniting support people living in crisis came to total of **\$173.70**. Thank you.



Farewell, and best wishes to our 'fill-in' organist of nearly 20 years

Thank you Michael Clarke

Just on six months ago, Michael Clarke played the organ at a Sunday Service for the final time.

In a reply to an email from Marg White (while she was temporarily filling in for Carolyn at the Church Office), Michael outlined how his occasional "fill-in" role came about.

Its origin is in 1955, during his third year of organ lessons, when his aunt, June Clarke, was getting married at St Marks Church, corner of Burke and Canterbury Roads. She asked him to play at her wedding. He was petrified at first, but agreed to do it. And of course all went perfectly fine. This is a very nice story, but where do we come in....?

Well, some 45 years later, Aunt June's (very last) son was finally getting married. And June once again asked if Michael would play for son Andrew's wedding at Scotch College Chapel in April 1999. This time, Michael was petrified that he would have largely forgotten how to PLAY the organ, because he had not been playing for some 30 years – the organ lost out to work demands which were "a powerful counter-attractor throughout that period!" He agreed to play, reluctantly, but how would he get hold of an organ to practice on after decades of just occasional home piano-playing? Michael continues.....

"Brainwave – Edith Clarke, my mother, had been a member of the Camberwell Uniting Church for some years. Maybe she could enquire as to whether I could do some practice on the organ there. She arranged for me to meet Bill Kirkpatrick after the Church Service one Sunday in (I think) January 1999. In our post-service

conversation, I said to Bill that I expected to pay the hourly rate for practice, but when he had no feel for a suitable 'rate' for the odd bit of practice, I suggested that maybe I could serve as a fill-in organist, free of charge, to let him take the odd break from his onerous service commitment. We shook hands on what was a mutually beneficial result to our discussion.

And so, from early 1999, I became a fill-in organist at the Camberwell Uniting Church. By coincidence, soon after that handshake, I was able to purchase a pre-loved 3-manual (electronic) Johannus Organ through Bernie's MusicLand; any need to travel from home (in Donvale) to an organ (in Camberwell) had suddenly evaporated. So, would I resign from my fill-in organist agreement since I wouldn't be using the Camberwell organ for practice anymore?

Not then, nor since: because I loved the COMBINATION of Choir and Organ. That combined sound I cannot achieve alone. It's all very well to like hearing and playing organ solos, but I also love hearing (and playing the organ with) a good Choir. The combination is gestalt: the synthesis is much more than the simple sum of the separate sounds."

And so we come back to the middle of last year. Michael's increasing age, and his (mild case, he says) of DuPuytren's Contracture are forcing him to stop. In his opinion, he has become "less reliable (old age), and less capable (DuP's Contracture) of playing to the level that a good choir and a good Organ deserve," i.e. the condition of his hands has made it impossible for him to continue as our "fill-in" organist, a role he has performed for us for over 18 years.

Over that last 18 years, Michael has "treasured the many moving rehearsals and interactions with the choir – AND with the congregation through their rousing chorus during those great hymns from the worthier hymnaries. The feedback I sense during some 'last verses' has had me fighting back tears on quite a few occasions. Well done to both the Choir and the Congregation."

PS

In her email to Michael, Marg White made reference to 'how much we appreciated his wonderful final Postlude', and 'how great it was that his wife and other family members came and wished him well etc.'

In reply, Michael indicated that his wife (Mary), his daughter (Margaret), her husband (Paul Kelly, his page-turner) and their two daughters were not invited by him – they happened to hear that this would be his last 'gig' and decided

secretly to come over. He was delighted at their presence.

In relation to his final postlude, he identified it as being from Sonata No.8, Opus 132, composed by organist Josef Gabriel Rheinberger (1839 – 1901), the “Introduction” and “Passacaglia.” “It’s a piece I fell in love with when I heard John Mallinson play it in the Scotch Chapel in 1953, when we were both still students there – his last year and my 3rd last year. It has remained one of my emotionally powerful favourites ever since. I started learning it as soon as I bought my copy of the music from Allans in the city’, as we used to say.”

Michael concluded by saying “my best wishes to... all those I have come to know at Camberwell U C, particularly the stalwart choristers.”

I sometimes think it is a sad thing that whilst some of us remember fondly a person (and in this case his fine musical touch), Michael has stepped away like almost like he was never here. The importance of our Church Council (through Fiona E and Ruth C), and Marg W in formally acknowledging his unwavering commitment and contribution to our Church life and history cannot be overestimated.

Ed

Some humour involving the Western Wall. Yes, really.

A journalist heard about a very old Jewish man who had been going to the Western Wall to pray, twice a day, every day, for more than 70 years.

She went to the Western Wall to check it out and there he was. She watched him pray for about 45 minutes and then approached and introduced herself.

“Sir, how long have you been coming to the Western Wall and praying?”

“For about 70 years”.

“That’s amazing. May I ask, what do you pray for?”

“I pray for peace between the Christians, Muslims and Jews. I pray for all the wars and hatred to stop. I pray for all our children to grow up safely and be responsible adults and to love their fellow man. I pray that politicians tell us the truth and put the interests of the people ahead of their own interests.”

“How do you feel after doing this for 70 years?”

“Like I’m talking to a brick wall.”

Messy Church Reports

Sunday 24 December 2017 was, what else, but a Messy Christmas!!



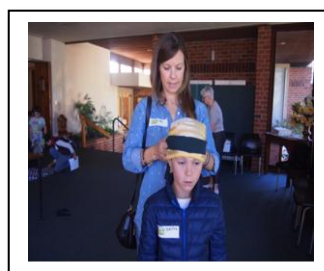
We concentrated on the shepherds who followed the Angel’s instructions which led them to the stable at the inn in Bethlehem. There they found Mary and Joseph and a new baby who would be called Jesus, God’s son, who grew up to change the world.

Our gathering activity was dressing up as shepherds and a game of finding sheep in various places around the buildings. Once in shepherds gear we were given a quiz, “Messy Shepherd Games” - we had to go around to find the answers, scattered around the church and other areas, including a competition to count the number of sheep in the purple field. Our reward was a sheep badge.

In the hall we could make a matchbox Nativity scene that Judy helped to stand up on a base. Marg. gave us an empty bauble and a tray to put our baubles on. Lorraine helped us put nail polish on our bauble to make a beautifully coloured tree decoration. We could also make “minecraft” sheep using Lego.

On a card which could be hung on the Christmas tree, we could write the name of someone we were thankful for. This would join all the prayers written by other members of our congregation which were part of the Christmas tree decorations which had been written over the 4 weeks of Advent.

Maxene had jumbo Lego in the fellowship room for any younger children to build a road from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Helen and her daughter Ann had the food craft under control - yummy fruit was put on skewers, and the watermelon and cantaloupe were cut into Christmas shapes with cookie cutters.

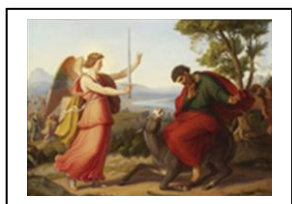
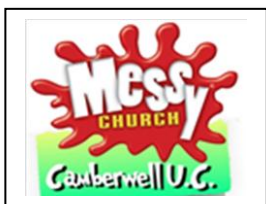


For the Celebration in the church, Fiona read the story of shepherds “Jed and Roy McCoy”, and Ian showed a video story of children acting out the Nativity story. He then talked about what Christmas meant - giving gifts to others especially those in need. We then sang Christmas songs (including Away in a Manger) to musical accompaniment and our percussion instruments.

Then dinner - delicious barbequed sausages which we had in bread with sauce and salad. Dessert was jelly, fruit and slices.

And that’s how 27 children and 32 adults enjoyed Christmas Eve, our last Messy Church for 2017. Thanks to Ian and Margery for another wonderful Messy Church year.

Sunday 11 February 2018 was our first Messy Church for the year 2018 and was the story of Balaam’s Donkey from the book of Numbers (chapter 22)



This story concerns the prophet Balaam, known as both a diviner and a curser. After Balaam starts punishing his donkey for refusing to move, it is miraculously given the power to speak to Balaam by God (Numbers 22:28), and it complains about Balaam’s treatment. At this point, Balaam is allowed to see an angel, who informs him that the donkey is the only reason the angel did not kill Balaam.

The Gathering activity with Margery was making a donkey hand puppet - a talking donkey puppet as in the bible story. Then we could go camping outside with Ian. We saw Balaam’s donkey coming through a bush near the camp.

The children next dressed up as Angels (male and female angels) with Max and waved a (blow up) sword to stop Balaam from cursing the Hebrews, who were refugees and camped on the other side of the river from the land of the King of Moab. The King heard Balaam was good at curses. God did not want Balaam to curse the Hebrews.

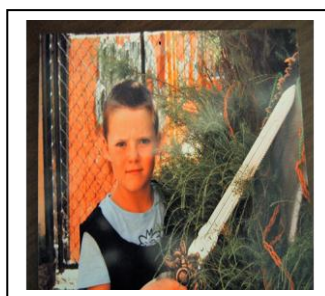
Food craft with Helen involved decorating a biscuit as a donkey face. Children also made crowns for Balak, the King of Moab. Then followed an enjoyable game of “Bucaroo” with

March 2018

Jessica. They could make a road for Balaam to travel on and build a town with Duplo.

In the fellowship room there were bibles, and Fiona asked questions about the story, so everyone hunted in the bibles for the answers.

Into the celebration, where all sang “I see God in You” and “Life is better with a little mess” accompanied by percussion instruments. Fiona read the story of Balaam and his (talking) Donkey, adapted from the bible story by Ian. Then everyone watched a cartoon version of the story. Ian talked about God’s love for us all, and how we are to treat other people and not curse them. Also how important it is to tell the truth.



Dinner was hamburgers and salad, plus pancakes for dessert, cooked by Stuart for Uniting Pancake Day to mark the start of Lent. Gold coin donations were given for the pancakes. A wonderful time was had by all 28 children and 29 adults.

Fiona Ensor

Report of Camberwell Uniting Church Asylum Seeker Support Group (CASS)

The first meeting for 2018 took place at Highfield Road UC on Tuesday 20th February. It was a special occasion because Lisa Stewart, the newly appointed Mission and Ethos Partner for the UC in Victoria and Tasmania, and Andi Jones, another recent appointment as the Manager of Lentara’s Asylum Seeker Project attended. It was an excellent opportunity for us to hear about how they perceive their roles and how we complement each other. Questions were raised about how residents are selected for Illoura and Lentara’s role in supporting them through case workers and a housing officer. Vacancies are filled on the basis of needs and of how it is anticipated the person will fit in with those already there.

It was recognized that most of the residents can’t cook and there will be discussion soon with Lentara staff and the residents about the possibility of some help in that respect. Given that some of our fruits and vegetables are unfamiliar there is plenty of scope.

We have just had our 4th annual Pleasant Sunday Afternoon. We were fortunate that Giovanna Riveros and Sharmila Periakapan performed for us at no charge and that all food for the High Tea was donated. This means that all money collected on the day goes to the maintenance of Illoura and our role in providing housing for asylum seekers.

The next meeting of CASS is Tuesday April 17, at Camberwell UC.

Margaret Watters

Angels - As Explained By Children!

(long live the age of innocence).

I only know the names of two angels, Hark and Harold. Gregory, age 5

Angels work for God and watch over kids when God has to go do something else. Mitchell, age 7

Angels don't eat, but they drink milk from Holy Cows!!! Jack, age 6

Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The main subject is where you went wrong before you got dead. Daniel, age 9

Everybody's got it all wrong. Angels don't wear halos anymore. I forget why, but scientists are working on it. Olive, age 9

My guardian angel helps me with maths, but he's not much good for science. Henry, age 8

What I don't get about angels is why, when someone is in love, they shoot arrows at them. Sarah, age 7

And finally....

Angels live in cloud houses made by God and his son, who's a very good carpenter.

Jared, age 8

*How could I not share this with you!! Thanks to **Lois Grenfell** for these statements from the innocents*

The best sermons are lived, not preached, and here are a few testimonies:

1. Today, I interviewed a grandmother for part of a research paper I'm working on for my Psychology class. When I asked her to define success in her own words, she said, "Success is when you look back at your life and the memories make you smile."
2. Today, in the cutest voice, my 8-year-old daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I

chuckled again and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?" Because that's where I keep all my stuff," she said.

3. Today, a boy in a wheelchair saw me desperately struggling on crutches with my broken leg and offered to carry my backpack and books for me. He helped me all the way across campus to my class and as he was leaving he said, "I hope you feel better soon."
4. Once, I was travelling in Kenya and I met a refugee from Zimbabwe. He said he hadn't eaten anything in over 3 days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then my friend offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating. The first thing the man said was, "We can share it."

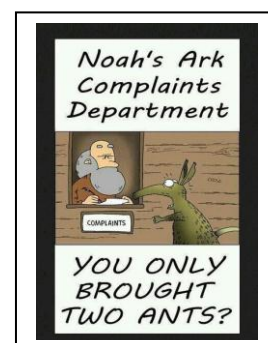
All days are beautiful, only the weather changes.

Thanks to Lois Grenfell

The poem below was written by Vicky Basdeo, a friend of Elizabeth McKay's daughter. She explained that she has always had a problem coping with mess, but one day while sitting in a forest she was inspired to write this:

Oh you messy creator!
I see your fingerprints everywhere!
In reverence to you my dear,
I'm ready to let go of this fear of mess,
And finally embrace
The riotous wild beauty of creation,
Like an uninhibited curious child.
Let's dig deeper to unravel,
To uncover the chaotic beauty
Within
and around us,
and between us.
It's a constant pulsing dervish.
We dance and weave,
as we breathe and move,
Sometimes pulsing in,
And sometimes expanding and growing
in our trust in self,
Others and
You, dear one.

Elizabeth McKay



Pleasant Sunday Afternoon - March 4

All who came enjoyed hearing Giovanni Riveros & Sharmila Periakarpan, and of course the delicious high tea. To this point \$1,865.00 has been donated – a generous amount in support of asylum seekers. Many thanks to all who contributed in so many ways to the success of the day. A splendid team effort. Thank you Eric and Elizabeth for organizing the musicians, Margaret for your sound leadership, Ian for sharing in the presentation & everyone who contributed food, ideas, time & support. A vibrant community event!



- A non sequitur walks into a bar. In a strong wind, even turkeys can fly.
- Papyrus and Comic Sans walk into a bar. The bartender says, "Get out -- we don't serve your type."
- A mixed metaphor walks into a bar, seeing the handwriting on the wall but hoping to nip it in the bud.
- Three intransitive verbs walk into a bar. They sit. They converse. They depart.
- A synonym strolls into a tavern.
- At the end of the day, a cliché walks into a bar -- fresh as a daisy, cute as a button, and sharp as a tack.
- A run-on sentence walks into a bar, it starts flirting. With a cute little sentence fragment.
- A figure of speech literally walks into a bar and ends up getting figuratively hammered.
- An allusion walks into a bar, despite the fact that alcohol is its Achilles heel.
- The subjunctive would have walked into a bar, had it only known.
- A misplaced modifier walks into a bar owned a man with a glass eye named Ralph.
- The past, present, and future walked into a bar. It was tense.
- A dyslexic walks into a bra.
- An Oxford comma walks into a bar, where it spends the evening watching the television getting drunk and smoking cigars.
- A simile walks into a bar, as parched as a desert.
- A hyphenated word and a non-hyphenated word walk into a bar and the bartender nearly chokes on the irony. **lan**

A little humour for the grammatically apt.

- A bar was walked into by the passive voice.
- An oxymoron walked into a bar, and the silence was deafening.
- Two quotation marks walk into a "bar."
- A malapropism walks into a bar, looking for all intensive purposes like a wolf in cheap clothing, muttering epitaphs and casting dispersions on his magnificent other, who takes him for granite.
- Hyperbole totally rips into this insane bar and absolutely destroys everything.
- A question mark walks into a bar?
- A dangling participle walks into a bar. Enjoying a cocktail and chatting with the bartender, the evening passes pleasantly.

Ministry: Worship 10.00 am
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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