



# Kairos



## News in and around Camberwell Uniting Church

Volume 9 Number 2

August 2016

### Minister's Musings



Warm Greetings,

As I write this I've been pondering matters of justice. 'Law and Order' issues, Royal Commissions and our national treatment of those seeking asylum here keep these matters in the public eye. Many voices in our civilized society are heard calling for justice. But I wonder whether we think enough about the underlying assumptions that this all rests on.

My examples and figures come from Rev Dr Chris Walker, who works with our UCA National Assembly and I'm grateful for his detailed work on these. Justice is a concept that has a wide variety of connotations. Fairness, even-handedness, judgment and reasonableness are part of the justice equation, but 'whose justice' and what values it's informed by are live questions. Impartiality is meant to be involved, but inevitably there is a subjective element and the recent instance of a judge giving a judgment on himself highlights this. The search for justice often comes out of experiences of injustice and lack of fairness. If violence or dispossession is involved, the sense of pain and loss are strong.

Three qualifying terms associated with justice are helpful to flesh out some of the values involved. There's punitive justice, distributive justice and restorative justice and they have differing sets of values behind them.

'Punitive' justice is about punishing the person for a crime committed. This is more than retribution, which reasons that punishment is the appropriate response to crime. Punitive justice goes beyond this and may lead to ongoing suffering on the part of people who often have little opportunity to change their situation. Think of the high incidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in prison and refugees and asylum seekers in off shore detention centres. The reasoning is often given in terms of 'sending

a warning message' to those that might think of engaging in a similar misdemeanor.

In the past decade there has been a 20% increase in the Australian prison population. It's not that crime rates have increased at this rate, but that there's a political will to be seen as 'strong on law and order'. In June 2015 there were 36,134 prisoners in Australian prisons, a 7% increase in one year. There were 9,885 prisoners who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, over a quarter (27%) of the total Australian prison population. Yet they represent approximately 2% of the Australian population aged over 18 years. Most studies suggest that punishment is not an effective deterrent, so what is achieved?

'Distributive' justice is about the allocation of goods and wealth in a society. It relates to the process by which goods are distributed to members of society. It has to do with fairness, how rewards and costs are shared. For example, most would agree workers should be paid a fair wage for their work and there should be equal pay for equal work regardless of gender. Often, we hear of workers being exploited and forced to accept unhealthy or unsafe conditions. If cost cutting is required they are the ones to lose their jobs or have wages reduced. Workers in third world factories and farms are obvious instances of this, especially women.

The gap between the very rich and poor is becoming even greater in our world. Studies have found that the three richest people in the world possess more financial assets than the lowest 48 nations combined. A January 2016 report by Oxfam claims that the 62 wealthiest individuals in the world have a combined wealth equal to that of the bottom 50% of the world's population. Tax havens benefit the rich and multinational companies. This lost revenue could be used for healthcare and education and

save millions of lives. It's said that most poverty could be readily eliminated by 2030 if companies and rich individuals paid their taxes.

Finally, a few words about 'restorative' justice. This is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of the victims and the offenders, as well as the community. This contrasts to more punitive approaches which aim to punish the offender. Victims have an active role in the process. Offenders are expected to take responsibility for their actions. This involves apology, returning stolen money and repairing the harm they have done where possible. Community service is generally required. The restorative justice approach aims to lead the offender into a productive life that avoids future offences. Restorative justice that fosters dialogue between the victim and offender has shown the highest rates of victim satisfaction and offender accountability. This is the model that the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission used successfully after the end of apartheid in 1995. It has also been used in Northern Ireland and by the Methodist Church in the US.

Christian faith favours a restorative justice approach. Justice is a major biblical concern. The prophet Amos thundered against the powerful of his day saying, "They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed....But let justice roll on like a river and righteousness like a never failing stream!" (Amos 5:24). Jesus calls us to "strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Jesus' life and teaching show a concern especially for the least and a criticism of those who misuse their wealth and power. The reign of God he proclaimed was one in which God's justice, compassion and peace would prevail.

We often pray for peace and justice. I'd like to think that the two go hand in hand very neatly. If by justice, we mean that sort of justice built on the restorative model that seeks healing and renewed people, victims, perpetrators and community. There's much complexity in these matters and this is just a cursory glance, but for those wanting justice, personally or in our society, I think it helps to know what such a thing might look like.

Grace and Peace,

**Rev'd Ian Brown**

**August 2016**

## **From the Editor.....**

Hello from the editor

Welcome to the winter edition of Kairos in 2016. And a very cold, wet winter it has been so far.

I am feeling the cold more than ever at the moment, as I have just returned from a lovely spell of R & R in Noumea in New Caledonia, where the minimum temperature was 18° and the maximum each day we were there was 24°.

But enough of feeling sorry for me. When I am lucky enough to travel anywhere, I always try to use the experience to increase my knowledge (of the local people, culture, history etc.) and this most recent trip was no exception.

New Caledonia is predominantly a Catholic country, so an initial sightseeing tour took us to the highest point overlooking the city and its main harbour. The crown of this highest point was a church with a prominent statue of Mary casting a benevolent and maternal eye over the people of the island.

On the day we visited, and in a wide circle surrounding the statue, the local faithful flock were in the process of putting the final touches (cementing and colourful painting) to a number of structures each about the size of a stand-alone BBQ. On enquiry, we ascertained they were to represent "*the stations of the cross*".

I turned to my beloved travelling companion, to whom I defer on most matters of theology, to ask '*how many Stations of the Cross are there, they seem to be building an awful lot of shrines at which to worship?*' On this occasion, however, the answer was not immediately forthcoming, so I set about counting the structures and determined that there were fourteen. Fourteen? Not twelve....., reduced to eleven? No, fourteen.

With no-one else able to enlighten us, we had to wait until we returned back to our hotel room and could search Dr Google. And what do you know, according to Catholic On-Line, "*the Stations of the Cross are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man. The 14 devotions, or stations, focus on specific events of His last day, beginning with His condemnation. The stations are commonly used as a mini pilgrimage as the individual moves from station to station. At each station, the individual recalls and meditates on a specific event from Christ's last day. Specific prayers are recited, and then the individual moves to the next station until all 14 are complete.*"

**Susan (Sue) Phillips**  
**12 November 1951 – 20 June 2016**

*The Stations of the Cross are commonly found in churches as a series of 14 small icons or images. They can also appear in churchyards arranged along paths. The stations are most commonly prayed at during Lent on Wednesdays and Fridays, and especially on Good Friday, the day of the year upon which the events actually occurred.”* Wikipedia adds that “it has become one of the most popular devotions and the stations can be found in most Western Catholic as well as in a number of Anglican, Lutheran and Methodist parishes.

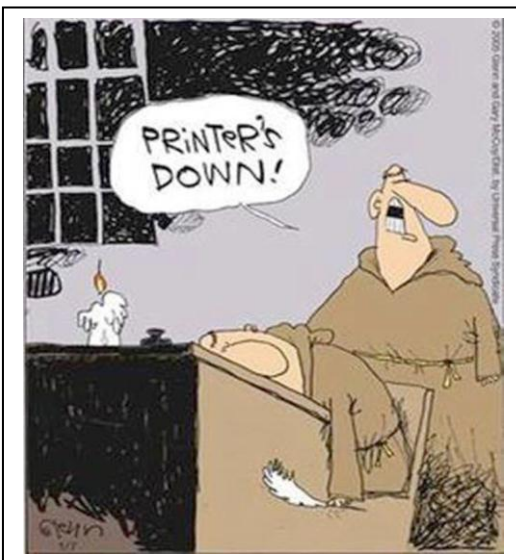
All of which I am sure you, dear reader, already knew. Well I don't believe I ever knew, or I have completely forgotten (more likely) that there was a specific number of “stations”. Now I will never forget the number. Equally I will also be reminded at Easter next year when we are performing our own multi-faith pilgrimage, of our small but lovely time in the sun in the middle of the Pacific Ocean in the heart of a cold and wet Melbourne winter.

In this edition of Kairos, you will also find the results of some research into the person behind another one of our stained glass windows. This time we feature Reverend John Rowse, who, along with the previously-featured Padre Gault, are the only two people commemorated by windows at our church whom I believe were actually formally appointed as Ministers to the Camberwell Methodist Church.

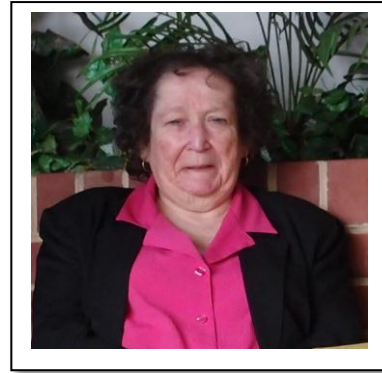
It still seems to be true, as Aristotle said many, many years ago that “*the more you know, the more you know you don't know.*”

Together with a number of other items of interest contributed by others, I hope you find this edition of Kairos informative and enjoyable.

**SE**



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Legend has it that Sue Phillips walked into Camberwell Uniting Church one Sunday morning in late 1980s, liked what she heard and whom she met, and stayed.

And stay she did, participating regularly in worship, enjoying the social contact after the Sunday service, and contributing in her own way to many of the activities that make up the fabric of our church life, e.g. KUCA, NCYC.

Sue was a long standing member of the House to House group, which started in 1983, and was still coming along to see what she could do to assist at Messy Church.



Sue's sudden death, on 20/6/16, came as a shock to us all. At the service to celebrate her life, Sue's sister-in-law spoke fondly of a much loved family figure. Sue was always the constant, and also the confidant, of all the family secrets. She did this just by sitting and listening, and never giving out what she knew, although she was known to be the occasional tease.

Many of us knew Sue's mother Bertha, and many members of our congregation put time in to ensuring that Sue was able to attend as many of the church activities as she was able to accommodate.

Sue was unfailingly positive, and never grumbled, about life or anyone. Outside of her immediate family, the Camberwell Uniting Church was Sue's second family. And like any family, we celebrate her life, but privately mourn the loss of one of our own.

## CASS

The bi-monthly meetings have been continued and the constant concerns of how we might support asylum seekers generally and the residents of Illoura in particular are foremost in our minds. There have been several newcomers to our meetings and we are very pleased to be cooperating with St John's Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support Group.

Ian Brown and Margaret Watters were invited to one of the St John's meetings for them to find out about Illoura because they are keen to support our efforts. The Asylum Seekers Resource Centre sponsored and led a conversation seeking information on community attitudes to make a case to the local parliamentarians. Several of our CASS members participated in that.

The Illoura residents are very grateful for the gifts from the Camberwell congregation and from Camcare. The support of the February concert enabled us to forward over \$2,500 to Lentara for their general support of asylum seekers.

There was another opportunity to support our fundraising (in conjunction with Camberwell Oxfam) on July 24<sup>th</sup> at 2.30 pm when the Duo Vela musicians presented their program of classical music, from around the world, on guitar and flute. The program was followed by High Tea! By any standard this event



was a huge success. Over 100 people attended, many spoke warmly and approvingly of the music program and the High Tea was unanimously endorsed as being beautifully presented, and a joy to partake. Almost \$3,000 was raised, and the collective participation of all involved in preparation, presentation and service delivery was superb and produced a fantastic result. Well done to all!!

**Margaret Watters**

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### Jan Richardson - Lost Blessing

Widely known for books such as *Sacred Journeys*, *Night Visions*, and the recently published *In the Sanctuary of Women*, Jan Richardson is an artist, writer, and ordained minister in the United Methodist Church, which is a mainline Protestant denomination that is part of the Methodist movement in America.

Whether creating her luminous painted paper collages, or laying down the haunting lines of her charcoal drawings, Jan illuminates the landscape of faith with courageous vision and a generous spirit. Jan currently lives in Central Florida.

Jan posts her words and art on a website for public consumption, and below is one such post: In a scene from *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, as the crew sails beyond the known world on a quest to rescue Captain Jack Sparrow, Will Turner asks Captain Barbossa for a heading. With a keen eye born of long experience on the sea, Barbossa replies, "Aye, we're good and lost now."

"Lost?" Elizabeth Swann asks, clearly unsettled by the relish with which Barbossa has delivered his navigational assessment.

"For sure," Barbossa assures her, "you have to be lost to find a place that can't be found, else ways everyone would know where it was."

"It's one of those frustrating truths of the journey: that sometimes the only sure way to find the place we belong is to let ourselves become good and lost—to allow ourselves to be unsure of the next step, to give up looking for markers and directions, and to wait until a path begins to show itself.

In the liner notes to her CD *The Book of Secrets*, Loreena McKennitt writes, "In the end, I wonder if one of the most important steps on our journey is the one in which we throw away the map."

If we ever had a map in the first place.

It can be uncomfortable, at the least, to let ourselves become lost. Letting go of familiar landmarks that have helped us know where and who we are can come with no small amount of pain, even as it opens the possibility of worlds we never imagined.

Of all the experiences I'm navigating on my journey with grief, the sensation of being lost in my own life is one of the most bewildering and difficult. Yet I am finding it also to be a place of remarkable grace. For now, letting myself be lost means letting there be some things in my life that I don't have to figure out just yet. It means allowing myself plenty of time to be in the studio, exploring new creative directions without an agenda or an impending deadline. It means giving myself time to rest, to wander, and to dream my way toward the next right step.

This is a new blessing born of being in that lost and graced place.

If you are feeling lost in your life, this is for you. Deep peace to you.”

## Lost Blessing

It doesn't always mean to go astray. But somehow this blessing knew it would find you here –

Here in this place where even you don't know where you are.

This blessing regrets to say it left its compass at home. It is without map, chart, GPS. It has hardly any native sense of direction.

This blessing appears to be nearly useless, in fact.

But - and I know this might not be encouraging - it purely loves getting lost.

This blessing has learned to breathe when it has left every landmark behind, when it has seen its last signpost, when dark has begun to fall while it is still far from home.

This blessing knows the prayers to say when it has misplaced its way, the chants that will help it find the path where it seems no path could ever be.

This blessing is good at finding fellow travellers.

It loves the company of the lost, the wandering, the confused, and the ones who have been walking in circles for days;

loves helping them find water, shelter, shade;

loves keeping vigil so they can safely rest.

The point of this blessing is that it has no real point.

It just wants you to know you are not alone, have never been, will never be - that it will go with you, will wander with you as long as you want, as long as it takes, gladly being lost with you until your way appears.

**Jan Richardson**

*Using Jan's words... For worship services and related settings, you are welcome to use Jan's blessings or other words from this blog without requesting permission. All that's needed is to acknowledge the source: "© Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com."*

*These are words that carry much substance and comfort, I think, particularly for those who may*

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*be enduring tough personal times. Thank you to Helen Martin for sourcing this work and for sharing it as part of her 'Prayers for the People'.*

## Messy Church Reports

### April – July 2016

The Messy Church Report this edition is a little briefer than previously. This due to the fact that, due to a combination of winter and school holidays, we decided not to have a 'Messy Church' in June. However, for the remaining 'Messys':

### In **April**, it was time to look at the **Messy Brothers - Jacob and Esau**

The story of twin brothers from the old testament is typical of what happens in many families even today. Esau and Jacob were the twin sons of Rebecca and Isaac. Esau was born first and was very hairy - red in colour it is written. In those days the first born son received a birthright - he inherited his father's possession on his father's death. Jacob was sneaky and received the birthright from Isaac by pretending to be Esau. The brothers reunited after fighting for many years. God still loved them, and helped Jacob even when he deceived his father and brother.



The gathering activity was making a red beard like Esau - Ian did look different in his and it tickled a lot! Vegetables were cut for soup - like the soup Rebecca made for Isaac when he was dying, for Jacob to give him and pretend he was Esau. There was colouring a "photo" of the twin brothers - like the type a family hangs on the wall. Making the twin babies out stockings and stuffing was also very popular.

When Jacob was fleeing a very angry Esau, Jacob had a dream in which God sent him a ladder with angels going up and down it, to show God would always love him. Hence there were angels to make using champagne corks which were painted and had wings attached. Or angels could be made from marshmallows, white chocolate buttons and a Malteser (for the head).

Icing was used to hold the angel together!! Yum, Yum.

In the Celebration, "If you are black or if you are white, God loves you" and "Abraham had many kids (instead of sons) were sung. Then "Cecil" (the puppet) and "Miss Fiona " talked about Jacob's dream of the ladder and what it meant. Ian led us in prayer. To finish Ian showed us the video that Eric McKay took at the last Messy Church which was shown at the Messy Church conference in England in May that Ian and Margery attended.

Dinner was vegetable soup and cheese on toast and fruit (and marshmallow angels of course). We did enjoy the Messy time we shared, all 24 adults and 10 children.

**May was - Messy Beginnings** - In the beginning God created the Heaven and Earth..... and trees and plants.

The creation of the earth was messy but wonderful. It started with a scavenger hunt - finding animals from the clues. The older children helped those who couldn't read. Other activities included creating paper planes (paper is made from trees), and seeing how far they could fly.

From clay the children created a person or animal from "playmaize" - made from corn - to create flowers or insects. They also created a jungle from cardboard cut outs of animals and seeing how many animals could be made, and made animals out of vegetables and toothpicks, e.g. giraffes.

In a corner of the hall a Lego mega block land was created where kids could build whatever they wanted. Maree had made animal biscuits which were beautifully iced and then consumed.

In church for the Celebration led by Ian, everyone learnt a new song about making music for God. Fiona read the Creation story, then all sang "All Things Bright and Beautiful".

Dinner was soft shell tacos with meat sauce, cheese and salad. Then a biscuit or two and ice cream in cones for the young and young at heart!

Great fun and fellowship was had by all with the added excitement of a young mum and her two children who came because she saw our Facebook page!!! We hope she comes again. There were 15 adults and 10 children.

In **July**, it was time to meet **Short Zac**

Zacchaeus was very short man who was a tax collector for the Romans, in Jesus's time, in Galilee. He was not liked, and when Jesus was passing by, the crowd would not let him through to see Jesus so he climbed a Sycamore tree! Jesus saw him and asked Zacchaeus to take him to his house for a meal. A most unpopular thing to do in the eyes of the Jewish people because was an unpopular tax collector.

A crowd was created with people pictures stacked on top of each other - then we could stand on a platform and be Zac looking for Jesus.



Beautiful cupcakes were decorated to make Sycamore trees, with a green crackle top. Yum Yum! Plain tree leaves (same as a Sycamore tree) were painted with nail polish. A Lego tree with branches and Zac at the top was made on a Lego mat.

The Celebration was the story of Zacchaeus the Tax collector, and we sang 'Zacchaeus was a wee little man' and 'Sing a new song'.

**Fiona Ensor**

## Home Schooling

Most of our generation of 50+ were HOME SCHOOLED in many ways:

- My mother taught me **TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE**.  
"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."
- My mother taught me **RELIGION**.  
"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."
- My father taught me about **TIME TRAVEL**.  
"If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"
- My father taught me **LOGIC**.  
" Because I said so, that's why....."
- My mother taught me **FORESIGHT**.  
"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."
- My father taught me **IRONY**.  
"Keep crying and I'll give you something to cry about."

- My mother taught me about the science of **OSMOSIS**.  
"Shut your mouth and eat your supper."
- My mother taught me about **STAMINA**.  
"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."
- My mother taught me about **WEATHER**.  
"This room of yours looks as if a tornado went through it."
- My mother taught me about **HYPOCRISY**.  
"If I told you once, I've told you a million times, don't exaggerate!"
- My mother taught me about **BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION**.  
"Stop acting like your father!"
- My mother taught me about **ENVY**.  
"There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have wonderful parents like you do."
- My mother taught me about **ANTICIPATION**.  
"Just wait until your father gets home."
- My mother taught me **MEDICAL SCIENCE**.  
"If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they are going to get stuck that way."
- My father taught me **HUMOR**.  
"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."
- My mother taught me **HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT**.  
"If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."
- My mother taught me **GENETICS**.  
"You're just like your father."
- My mother taught me about my **ROOTS**.  
"Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?"
- My mother taught me **WISDOM**.  
"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."
- My father taught me about **JUSTICE**.  
"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

*This should only be passed on to the over 50 crowd because the younger ones would not believe we truly were told these "exact" words by our parents...*

*I am grateful to Helen Martin for providing this, and reminding me of one of the first things I said to myself when our first child was born – I am not going to be a parent like that to my children. Famous last words!!  
Ed*

**Choir of Hard Knocks**

I have been a volunteer with this choir for over nine years.

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We are now celebrating our tenth year with an Australian tour — culminating in Melbourne at Hamer Hall on Sunday August 14th (see notice board for details). Guest performers will be included in the program - Deborah Cheetham and David Hobson.

The choir came into fame with a television series on the ABC. Jonathon Welch is still the conductor and artistic director and quite a few of the original members are still with us. We rehearse every week at Deakin Edge, which is open to the public. As volunteers, we provide lunch from donated food.

Other choirs have grown out of this concept - the belief that singing helps build a physical and mental wellbeing and promotes community.

The choir has changed over the ten years - due to illness, deaths, or moving to full-time work. All members must be socially or physically disadvantaged. Some of our members are blind and others in wheelchairs. No audition is required.

I enjoy talking and listening to the choir members, who have daily struggles, and accompanying them to concerts, trips and corporate sponsored activities.

The choir has made a great difference to the lives of the choir who think of it as their family.



On my birthday at the Opera House in Sydney with Jonathon Welch

**Ruth Akie**

**The Smaller Beatitudes**

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves; they will have no end of fun!

Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill: they will be saved a lot of bother.

Blessed are those who know how to relax without looking for excuses; they are on the way to becoming wise.

Blessed are those who know when to be quiet and listen; they will learn a lot of new things.

Blessed are those who do not take themselves seriously, and can face serious things calmly; they will go far in life.

Happy are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown; you will walk on the sunny side of the street.

Happy are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitude of others, even when the signs are unfavourable; you may be taken for a fool, but this is the price of charity.

Blessed are those who think before acting and pray before thinking; they will avoid many blunders.

Happy are you if you know how to hold your tongue and smile, even when people interrupt and contradict you and tread on your toes; the Gospel has begun to creep into your heart.

ABOVE ALL blessed are you who recognise the Lord in all whom you meet; the light of truth shines in your life, for you have found true wisdom.

*Sisters of Charity, Fitzroy. UCA Mission Prayer Handbook, 2001.*

## Review:

Jafar Panahi's *Taxi* (2015) — Iran by Dan Clendenin. July 2016.

We hear a lot about Iran today, but what's it really like? Jafar Panahi is one of Iran's most influential film makers. He was arrested in 2010 along with his wife, daughter, and fifteen friends, on propaganda charges, sentenced to six years in prison, and banned from making movies, leaving the country, or talking to the media for twenty years. *Taxi* is the third film that Panahi has made since living under house arrest.



The documentary features Panahi under cover and in disguise — he dons a beret, attaches a camera to his dash board, and drives a taxi around Tehran. By my count there are eight random passenger conversations in the eighty minute film. Some are whimsical, one is tragic, and another is bizarre. There are several takeaways — art is a form of political subversion (witness the video and music bootleggers), religious conservatism is like constant background noise, and everyone is fearful of the

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criminal "justice" system. One passenger was beaten by thieves but refused to turn them in because he was scared about the punishment they might get from the government. Two passengers recognize Panahi, one of whom is his dissident lawyer who herself is under investigation by the government. *Taxi* premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in 2015, and won the best film award. I watched this film on Netflix Streaming; it's in Farsi with English sub-titles.



## A Happy Coincidence

In the same edition of *The Spectator* as that which featured the Unveiling of the Memorial Window for the Rev John Rowse (25 August 1954), I came across the following item:

*"Mr Norman Young, a theological student, who has been temporarily serving the East Ivanhoe congregation, was farewelled after the evening service on Sunday last. Mr Young has done much appreciated and very useful work.*

*He will be married in Geelong next Saturday, and on 6 September will proceed to America to engage in post-graduate studies at Drew University.*

*East Ivanhoe presented Mr Young with a travelling clock and a wallet of notes."*

Norman was indeed married to Barbara on August 28<sup>th</sup>, prior to heading to the USA. Very happy and exciting times!!

*Thanks to Norman for allowing Kairos readers to share this magic moment in his life. Ed*

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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