

July 2024

Connecting Younger Generations IN GOD'S LOVE

Embracing All People WITH CHRIST'S COMPASSION

Strengthening Community THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT



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We acknowledge the sovereign First Peoples of the lands and waters where we live and work across the country and pay our respects to Elders past and present who have cared for these lands for millennia. We are committed to walking together seeking justice and reconciliation.



High Street Times

## Presbytery News

### Focus on content accessibility for the disabled

Ministers, Lay Leaders and Church Council members are invited to attend workshops in September exploring how best to prepare content for people with a disability. The workshops are part of the Uniting Church's ongoing commitment to improving accessibility for people with disabilities, with staff members from equipping Leadership for Mission undertaking a half-day training session this week.

If people are interested, please contact Rev Ross so we can organise a group attendance.



Uniting AgeWell

### Uniting AgeWell

The Synod's age care arm has organised events that may be of interest.

Oakleigh uniting AgeWell Falls Prevention Session – June 27, 10.30 am

The education session will be informative and beneficial for those at risk at falls with presentations to reduce the likelihood of falling in the future.

68 – 72 Atherton Rd Oakleigh. Tickets at [trybooking.com](http://trybooking.com)

2024 Care Expo Melbourne 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August

Our focus is on supporting older people to experience a sense of wellbeing, choice and independence at every age and stage of their lives; to feel valued members of their community and to have access to the services they need to live the life they want. The Expo showcases the latest in innovation, products and services for seniors and aged care.

Melbourne Showgrounds, Epsom Rd, Melbourne.



Having returned last year after a break due to COVID, Somers Camp is running again in the first week of July.

For over 60 years Somers Camp has brought joy, love, energy and faith into the lives of children and youth. Based on Melbourne's beautiful Mornington Peninsula, we host a 5 day holiday experience for children in Grade 3 - Year 9 where adventure meets faith and friendships flourish!

Operating in association with the Uniting Church of Australia, we provide a vibrant and inclusive environment where young minds can explore, learn, and grow. From exhilarating activities to meaningful and exciting worships, every moment is crafted to inspire and engage.

Operating under the Auspices of the Presbytery, Somers is a great experience for young people from all over the Southeast of Melbourne. We have leaders from our congregation involved and Rev Ross is the appointed Liaison person from Presbytery. Please add Somers to your prayer list.



# From the Minister...



Rev Ross Writes



This year, the Lectionary readings from the Old Testament are following the stories of Samuel the prophet and David the shepherd boy who becomes king. And. Of course, that includes the very well-known story of David bravely standing up to the Philistine giant, Goliath. If the writers of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel are to be believed, Goliath was about 3 metres tall. It's no wonder that the Israelite army was shaking in fear at

Goliath's taunts. But David wasn't one to shake in fear, his experiences and his faith led him to be bold and confront Goliath. Whatever your thoughts about this story, there are big spiritual lessons for us as we confront challenges in our modern culture and life that look like invincible giants.

Lately, it seems like every aspect of life is challenged by goliaths. Climate Change threatening farming and coastal life. War and nationalism challenging trade and travel. Expansion of cities and extinction of species threatening the environment that supports us. Increasing fear, anger, and stress fuelling domestic violence, road rage, and crime. It can feel like the world situation is hopeless. The goliaths seem to be unbeatable. How are we to face all these stresses? Shaking like the Israelite army or trusting in God and facing the goliaths like David faced his challenge, a seemingly unbeatable threat to Israel?

In faith we can do something and not be frozen in worry. Not just thoughts and prayers but achievable actions. We may not be able to conquer our Goliaths like David did, but we can move beyond worry and feeling helpless. We can monitor and limit our energy usage or take positive steps to change to sustainable energy. We can take a stand against rising nationalism and racism and live as a multifaith, multicultural community. We can support actions to protect animals and native forests. And we can be positive and conciliatory in all our relationships and interactions, as examples of people who are not dominated by fear and anger.

In faith, in confidence, and in belief in a God of the possible, we don't need to cower before the challenges of life, even challenges that look as scary as a giant like Goliath. We are the spiritual descendants of the small group of apostles and communities that took on the Roman Empire, the missionaries that confronted the Gauls, the Goths and Vikings, and the great social reformers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Perfect love leads us to the problems and sufferings of the world, and perfect love drives out all fear.

## The 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, July 2024

Members of the church from all over Australia will be gathering in Sydney next month for the 17<sup>th</sup> Triennial Assembly. This will be an important meeting as the final report of the Act2: The Gift of the Spirit process is discussed. You will have seen a lot about Act2 over the past 2 years as the future structure of our church has been discussed at all levels of the church. It is becoming increasingly obvious that we have a structure that was put in place for a much larger church than we are now, and many regulations and processes do not suit the new expressions of the church that are emerging in so many places.





The final report covers three important areas of the life of the Uniting Church:

A: Communities of Faith

B: Theological Education

C: Church Governance and Structure

And the recommendations in each area to be discussed are:

A: Life Giving Communities of Faith and Discipleship

- Focus on discipleship and mission.
- A new toolkit for fit-for-purpose local governance.
- Better beginnings and endings for communities.
- Review of church membership to better align our rules and our reality.

B: A Network for a Flourishing Theological Culture

- National multi-campus Theological College.
- National Theological Culture Structure.
- Theological work on 'discipleship', 'evangelism', 'mission' and 'diaconal communities'.

C: Sharing our life and our Common Wealth

- Conduct a feasibility assessment of a three council model and a four council model.
- Develop a roadmap for implementation underpinned by a resourcing model.
- Identify and implement other actions to progress the Vision and Principles.

All of these directions are to be discussed and implemented at this Assembly, with a view to final decisions at the 2027 Assembly and Synods and Presbyteries as appropriate.

Please add the Assembly and all the members to your prayers as we discern these important changes to the life and structure of our church.



On Thursday, Rev Cam McAdam, Claire Harvey, Leticia Wishart, Ruth McAdam (all from the Village Church, Mt Eliza) and Tim Lake (High Street Road UC Frankston) went to present new Dunkley MP, Jodie Belyea with a Common Grace climate scarf.

Common Grace is an ecumenical justice organisation that has four key pillars, reconciliation, climate, family violence and asylum seekers, and encourages Christians and the church to act on these issues. The climate scarves originated in 2020 and the aim was to present one to every federal MP and Senator and to have them wear them on October 21 2021 in the lead up to COP26. Since then, every newly elected MP has been presented a scarf and more than 700 scarves have been knitted by 1500 knitters.

The climate scarf pattern represents the average global temperatures since 1919 and was developed by meteorologist Dr Mick Pope (who spoke at our church camp last year) using the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies temperature data.

Along with the climate scarf presentation, we were each able to share with Jodie some of our concerns about climate policy and government response to climate change.



## We pray...



- For those within our church family who find it difficult or are unable to attend worship, including Sheila and Leon Knoop, Gwen Paxino, Audrey LaBrooy, Ruth Conn, Marie de Silva, Lola Coupe, Margaret Snyder and Barbara Yates.
- For the family and friends of Audrey Smith, Beth McNamara and Nancy Ferguson who died recently.
- For Marj Mitchell who is unwell currently.
- For Jessie Williams, in rehab after a knee replacement.
- For Roy Gieseman, recovering from further surgery.
- For Nylma Carruthers, currently undergoing treatment.
- For the Carolus family, with Eileen receiving care, and her sister Val and family.
- For all others who are in poor health and having treatment.
- For Somers Camp coming up in July, and all the leaders and children.
- For members of the Synod dealing with the future of the church.
- For all affected by violence against women.
- For the conflict in Israel and Palestine.
- For Ukraine, still under attack from Russia.
- For the unsettled situation in New Caledonia.
- For all those living with mental health needs in our church family and our community, and our country.
- For those around Frankston who experience homelessness.
- For those struggling with the ever-increasing cost of living.

*The prayer chain regularly and continuously keeps particular needs in prayer. You can ask for prayers through the prayer chain by contacting Marlene, phone **5971 2840** or email [marlene.thresher@gmail.com](mailto:marlene.thresher@gmail.com), or emailing directly to [hsuca-prayer@googlegroups.com](mailto:hsuca-prayer@googlegroups.com). The prayer chain is a small group of church members who are dedicated to prayer, and consider all communication and prayer needs strictly private and confidential unless specified otherwise. Lots going on this month with our own stained glass artists and a wonderful Pentecost celebration*



### MONASH CHAPLAINCY

I have recently advised Church Council that I have officially resigned from the position of Chaplain at Monash Peninsula Campus, as of this week. As you know, after the funding ceased at the end of 2022, I have continued in the role for the past eighteen months in a voluntary capacity. Due to personal and family reasons I have more limited time to give to this work and decided that it is time to move on. I would like to thank Church Council and High St Uniting Church for giving me this wonderful opportunity eight years ago, and trusting that I would be able to carry out this work! I have loved the role and the support I've been given, and the whole experience. Very special thanks to Alan and Gill Jenkins who have spent many years supporting the pancake breakfast and myself. I will be away on some leave when this newsletter comes out, however will write some summary reflections on my return which I will share with Church Council and in High Street Times at a later date. Many thanks to all of you for your support. Mandy Lake.



On June 2<sup>nd</sup> Diana McNally supported by Helen Beeby spoke to both congregations about the Women's Spirit Project. Founded by our new MP Jody Belyea the project supports women on a journey which enables them to take emotional, physical, and intellectual risks that build their confidence, self-worth and resilience, in order to develop the courage and determination to realise personal goals.

The project offers accessible programs and events that integrate fitness, health, and wellbeing activities conducted in nature, enabling women to build strong connections with themselves, other women, the community, and the environment. On behalf of high Street Uniting Ross was pleased to donate \$1000 to the work.





# Christian Writers Tour of England

As part of my continuing education, in May this year I took part in a guided tour in the UK: The Christian Writers – CS Lewis Tour. The tour was focussed on Lewis's life and work in Oxford and Cambridge, but also included Charles Spurgeon, and John Bunyan, and mentions of G K Chesterton, JRR Tolkien, and Dorothy L Sayers.

The tour began in London with visits to St Paul's, and Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle, the British Library to look at some of the special documents – we didn't get to see them because a group of protestors had glued their hands to the Magna Carta case! - and finished the day at Westminster Abbey and Evensong.

The next day we journeyed to Oxford and experienced the University city for 3 days. While CS Lewis is well known as a writer of fantasy literature and as a fierce apologist for Christianity, he was primarily a professor of medieval and classic literature. We had a

guided tour around Magdalen College where Lewis was in residence, University College and Church where he was first a student, the Bodleian Library and the Radcliffe Camera. The architecture of Oxford is amazing, and a little overwhelming; you think you've seen it all and around the next corner is another breathtaking building!

On the Sunday I chose to worship at Wesley Memorial in the morning, and in the evening, a group of us went to St Aldates, which is a student focussed evangelical Anglican church. One



of the interesting discussions in the tour group, given the number and variety of churches that we visited, was considering what the church architecture was saying about the theology of the worship and life of the congregation. Was the focus sacrament, liturgy, or preaching? The relative positions and importance of the pulpit, the communion table and the organ or musicians all speak about what is the focus of worship.



On our last day in Oxford, we went to visit Lewis's house – The Kilns – and enjoyed a lecture from a renowned Lewis scholar, Michael Ward. We also visited the local church that Lewis and his brother Warnie attended regularly. There is a small plaque in the pew where they always sat, and both are buried in the church grounds. The day we were there, someone had placed a small toy lion at the foot of the gravestone – Aslan!





After Oxford, we journeyed to a retreat centre in the Cotswolds for 2 days, with plenty of reflection and reading time as well as an interesting study on the Psalms. And then we headed to Bedford to visit the Bunyan Museum and the Bunyan Meeting (Bunyan, as a Puritan, rejected the name church). Bunyan's book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, was, and is, fantastically popular, but his own life was a struggle. A fascinating look at life in the times when people were being jailed for not following the Anglican Prayer Book. We also went to the local church which Bunyan attended as a child; it is overwhelming to stand in a church that was built by William the Conqueror's niece!

The final part of our tour was to Cambridge, or, as Oxford people call it, 'the other place', where CS Lewis finished his time as a university professor. His fame and popularity meant that he was rejected for a seat at Oxford for being unscholarly. Cambridge is in some respects similar to Oxford, with a lot of impressive architecture, but feels very different. It was explained to us that Cambridge has



produced more Nobel Prize winners, while Oxford has produced more Prime Ministers. Again, we had a guided tour, beginning at the Round Church – appropriately named – and including some of the colleges with historic connections: one founded by Henry VIII, one supported by Thomas Clarkson, a major figure in the abolition of slavery, and one that contains the tree that Isaac Newton was sitting under thinking about gravity! Our stay in Cambridge was completed with Evensong at Kings College.



After the tour ended, I had some time for myself to look around London, seeing the Natural History Museum, Kensington

Palace, and into the city to check out Buckingham Palace, Westminster and Piccadilly. Then I took a few days to travel down to Cornwall to catch up on my family history. It was a delightful train ride from London to Redruth, although photos were a problem because the tracks are bordered by so many hedges and trees! Cornwall has a strong mining history which is celebrated in statues, memorials and tourist attractions, along with their maritime history.

I chose Redruth because my ancestors on my father's side all came from within a few miles of there. My Great Grandfather came to Australia from Cornwall in 1854.

I discovered that he left his hometown of Carharrack, just outside Redruth, as did about 1000 other men, when the tin and copper mines ran out, to seek better opportunities. No doubt the recent gold discoveries in Australia were a powerful lure. The resources of the local Cornish research centre also allowed me to check on the origins of my Great-great-Grandmother's maiden name. The staff were both interested and helpful, as the name, Baragwaneth, is quite rare!



Coincidentally, just outside Carharrack is the Gwenapp Pit where John Wesley preached on many occasions in the 18th Century. When he preached there it was just a convenient depression in the ground to help people shelter from the wind, although it did act as a natural amphitheatre. It is now properly teared with a 'pulpit' and still hosts regular services as well as being a tourist attraction.

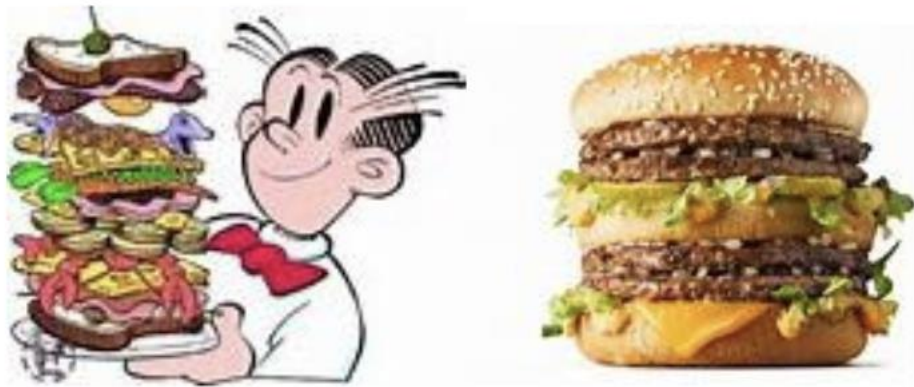
On return to London to return home, I had almost another day to see other sights and so I took the tourist boat down the Thames to Greenwich. A fascinating trip with the obligatory photo of a foot in each hemisphere!

As well as informative study leave, I did have a couple of questions to research, I had an amazing trip.

Rev Ross



# What's a Dagwood Sandwich?



You need to be of a certain age to answer that question. Dagwood was a popular comic book character 6 and more decades ago. Here is a picture to show you. A double Big Mac is the nearest modern day equivalent.

In the Dagwood you can see a slice of bread at the bottom and a slice of bread at the top and a large variety of very rich fillings in the middle. Why would anyone want to pose that question in a Church newspaper? There are similarities which I propose to show you.

The pattern of our worship is that one or more passages of scripture are read each time. Usually this only amounts to 10 or 20 verses at a time. Looking at such small passages is fine when we want to concentrate on the details contained therein. But it means that broader patterns become hidden. In earlier days scholars thought that the Gospel according to Mark was deficient because it was the smallest of all the four Gospels. Mark has 16 Chapters and only 666 verses. This compares with Matthew at 28 Chapters and 1,072 verses: Luke at 24 Chapters with 1,101 verses and John with 21 Chapters and 958 verses.

Mark's brevity belies his creativity in how he tells his story. Mark has a Dagwood sandwich of exceptional richness to show us. The first slice of bread is the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida in Mark 8: 22 – 26. The top slice comes with the healing of blind Bartimaeus in 10: 46 – 52. Now to the filling!

In between these outside layers three times we find this pattern. Firstly, Jesus speaks to his disciples as he is on his journey heading to Jerusalem. He will undergo much suffering, be rejected by the elders and ultimately be killed. Then, each time there is either a denial of that scenario or a demonstration that the disciples completely misunderstand the whole reason Jesus came to earth as a demonstration of God's love for the creation. Then, each time that denial is strongly rejected. Then, each time Jesus goes on to add further teaching to emphasise the importance of why he must go on this journey stating that it is for the benefit of all. You will find these three passages at 8:27 – 38; 9:30 – 37; and 10:32 – 45.

There is yet more richness contained between these two occasions when a blind man was healed. Chapter 9 has the story of the Transfiguration at its start. The chapter continues with a healing of the boy and the well-loved teaching about welcoming children into the community. Following the healing of Bartimaeus we are at the gates of Jerusalem and the drama continues and escalates. And we know the end that is coming. Don't ever associate the brevity of Mark with the idea of it being a poor Gospel compared to the others. Its brevity points to its richness of storytelling from which astute readers can gain much encouragement in their faith journey with Jesus.

Ian Cayzer



# *Christmas In July*

Unwrap some mid-year  
joy and join us in  
fellowship for a shared  
meal and entertainment.

Saturday 20th July  
1pm

\$240 per table 8 people  
(You decide who pays what)

On your own? Talk to Rev Ross  
and he will find you a place. \$30

Decorated Table Competition

## ZOOM/PHONE DETAILS

For all services:

On a tablet or laptop computer: Go to <https://zoom.us/j/95468493260> and use the password 3199.

(or go to <https://zoom.us/join> and use the meeting number below)

On a phone without video: call (03) 7018 2005

Meeting ID: 954 6849 3260 #

Participant ID: #

Password: 3199 #