



Morialta Vision



Volume 3 Issue 1

February 2010

From the Minister

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday I had not been clear enough in the information I had given to the person preparing the words for projection during worship and we had no words for the refrain to *Here I am, Lord*. Of course the Morialta Singers and a few scattered amongst the congregation had song books already opened but most of us did not have the words in front of us.

How wonderful it was then to hear the refrain being sung with growing confidence the first time, as people realised they **did** know it, and so strongly the second time. There was a sense of people moving beyond reading the words from the page or the screen to singing, not just "by heart", but also "from the heart". In fact it was sung so well that I will have to consider asking people not to put the words up in future!

With song books, photocopiers and projectors allowing us to share the words of songs easily on Sunday (always paying proper attention to copyright of course) we are not often in the position of needing to test our memory for song words. Which is a pity because learning the words of some songs (or at least the refrain) frees us to really enter into the song without juggling books or paying attention to follow the words on screen. We are able to pay more attention to the words we sing, to pay attention with our whole selves, not just our minds. And because we are singing and learning in community it doesn't matter if we forget an occasional word because the people around us will help us remember and carry us forward with them, just as we will help carry them when they forget.

And more than that, by learning the words we are able to carry that song with us, from our time of worship into the days and weeks that follow, indeed into the whole of our lives. And carrying the song means we carry those words of inspiration, of comfort, of wisdom with us to remind us of God's presence and love and call even, and especially, in those difficult moments of life when we most need to hear them.

May you all hear the music of God's love strongly in your heart in all your life and may you be ready to share it "from the heart" when it is most needed.

Grace and peace

Diane

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Reflect in Lent

You're gonna to have to serve somebody,

Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord,

But you're gonna to have to serve somebody.

You're gonna serve somebody

Bob Dylan

Tour 2010

Fun in the Flinders

30 August to 6 September

Walk in Wilpena Pound includes:
Ridge Top Tour at Arkaroola
Andamooka for 2 nights
Final night Port Augusta

Brochures will be available soon

David Purling writes ...

During Lent this year we shall be in England, and I will be preaching at Aylesbury Methodist Church on the first Sunday of Lent. This was our church for 3 years, 2001-2003.

A tradition the church has is that during Lent the Church follows the Lent Cross programme, "From Tragedy to Triumph".

The Christmas tree becomes the Cross. Branches from the Christmas tree are stripped, and made into a large cross. This immediately links the baby born in the stable with the man who died on the cross.

"From Tragedy to Triumph"

The Cross stood at the front of the church for all to see and each week symbols were placed on or around the Cross after an appropriate Bible reading referring to that symbol. For example, a moneybag was placed there with thirty pieces of silver, and then were added the bread and wine and a bowl and towel. On the fourth Sunday a purple robe and a crown of thorns were added. A whip was placed by the cross and on Palm Sunday a palm branch.

Consider this imaginary conversation I came across:

"I like this time of year. I love the stories of Jesus' adventures with his disciples!"

"I've never heard them referred to as "adventures". Do you believe that they are real?"

"Well, I don't know. I guess so."

"Place yourselves on the journey, if you dare."

"What do you mean, 'if you dare?'"

"It will take courage to face all that these people faced. It will take courage to walk the journey with Jesus."

"OK, I'll give it a try."

"We're heading first for the River



Jordan, where you will wade into the water with Jesus and witness his Baptism. Jesus will hear the words of heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased'."

"And then what?"

"From the river you will walk into the wilderness, the dry, desolate, barren wilderness; haunted by jackals; home to snakes and other crawling creatures; hot, dusty, devoid of food, water, a place to rest your head. You will have no comfortable bed; no change of clothes; no one to talk with for a very long time."

"Wait a minute.....I didn't plan on going into a desert. I need my creature comforts, you know. I'm not ready to make that kind of sacrifice."

"That is only the beginning of the obstacles you will face. It will require courage and great faith. Will you be with me?"

"Absolutely. This is no journey to take alone."

On Easter Sunday, the symbols were taken away and replaced with a covering of Spring flowers brought by members of the congregation.

The stark cross was converted from tragedy to triumph!

The triumph of love!



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We continue to reflect on the drapes that enhance our worship.

Purple



Purple represents penitence and humility. It is used during Lent, but can also be used in Advent. While quite different and distinctive in feel, both are seasons of hope and anticipation.

The Pulpit: The traditional symbol of hope, the rainbow, arches against a sky bright with water droplets.

The Communion Table: A Christmas star and the Easter Cross are superimposed. At the centre sits a pictorial representation of our Church in its urban environment, endeavouring to live out the heart of the Gospel.



The Lectern: Within the three Sturt Pea flowers lies the potential and promise of new life.

The Stoles: Satin folds imitate the flow of moving water.

Growing in Faith in Lent

Lent is traditionally a time of preparation for the great celebration of Easter; a time to deepen our faith, and stretch our understanding of how God moves within us and around us. Meeting in small groups is a great way to do that, particularly if we have been able to read or hear some new ideas that provoke our thinking and lead us into discussion. As we do that we are also able to get to know those in our group a little better, understand a bit more of each other's faith journey so we can encourage one another.

Lenten Discussion Groups this year will be hearing, via DVD, from Walter Brueggemann, a well-respected Old Testament scholar and author of many books such as *The Prophetic Imagination*, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, *Finally Comes the Poet*, and *Theology of the Old Testament*.

Short segments from a talk based around the story of the Exodus will encourage us to

consider those things that have power to draw us back from the freedom God offers to us, over and over again. There will be plenty of time to discuss the questions and issues raised, and to consider how we can learn again to make that journey from trusting in the things that enslave us, to living in God's promise of freedom.

Really the hardest thing about this study is getting your head around the title: "Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Today". What?! The title isn't the important thing though; the chance to explore and grow in faith together is.

If you are not already part of one of the Lenten Discussion Groups it's not too late to join in. There is information about the groups that are running on the notice board and which you are welcome to join. A phone call to the group leader might be appreciated.



From the Chairperson

It's not the beginning of a new year, but a new decade. The 'naughties' are over and we can look forward to this century becoming a teenager. That will take some planning!

I heard somebody, on radio, say recently that Australia closes down at Christmas and doesn't open again until February 1st. That might not sound reasonable to some of you who have been busy on a whole range of activity, but it resonated with me.

After coming back from a fantastic trip to Tasmania over the 'New Year' and getting used to Anne being on Leave, I realised that I hadn't been around church much. I really enjoyed my time away with Anne and the Secombes, but it's time to get back into it.

2010 is going to be another good year for Morialta. As well as all the opportunities for socializing and fellowship, there will be opportunities for members of the congregation to participate in new ways. Elsewhere in this edition there is an invitation for you to consider becoming a volunteer for one of the Community Centre activities – and there's more that is going on.

The Ministry Teams that respond so well to our call to mission are always looking for more participants. Then there are the Church Council elections being held at the end of March. Is there someone, in the congregation, who you think has the gifts to work in either of these ways? If so, talk to them and share your insight. Alternatively,

if you feel the call to serve in this way make a point of having a conversation about it with one of the members of a Ministry Team or Church Council. Members of Church Council are always available with a listening ear!

Another way that I find fulfilment is in taking part in a Lenten Reflection. I always find I learn a little more about my faith and I really appreciate the opportunity these groups give to deepen friendships within the congregation.

I know it's February already, but I still hope you have a happy, and fulfilling, New Year!

Bruce

Morialta's Student Houses

You may think that in the December-February period our Student Houses are quiet, empty and nothing is happening. To the contrary, whilst some residents have travelled, gone home for a time, visited friends, etc. there has been a constant presence and a "living" feeling about the houses. One student, continuing in the city with work commitments, had her family come to celebrate Christmas, complete with cooking the festive meal and some members staying for a time. Another returned in mid-January to commence her University Honours program, and another travelled back to attend a city wedding. Others had parents and friends join them.

These houses are "homes" in a real sense.

Amongst all of this there has been an ongoing buzz of maintenance work. Carpets have been cleaned, walls and ceilings painted, salt damp and plumbing issues tackled, rubbish removed, cleaning done inside and out, and kitchen cupboards culled.

We continue to sound the gongs of appreciation to Rob Webbe whose constant diligence and instant responses to sudden requests are the stuff of legend. And – in a day of intense and very professional looking activity he was assisted by Kingsley Stephens, Kevin Nash, Brian Hogben and Merv Boundy. A painting team of considerable experience, and good humour!

We are pleased to welcome three new residents who are gradually moving in and making rooms their own. In all cases the conversations and visits towards their entry have been an affirmation of the life, hopefulness and enthusiasm of young people. And Morialta's commitment in this area of mission has been confirmed and valued.

The courses in which our new entrants have won places cover degrees and double degrees in education, science, arts, aboriginal studies, and counselling.

Please hold them, and those who are continuing into senior stages of their studies, in your hearts.

Congratulations



... to Christine and Will
on their marriage on 3 January
A change in the New Year!

At Glengowrie UC, the bride and groom were a handsome couple. Families and friends were very happy, queuing to express congratulations, the hall was packed to capacity and Rev Diane Bury officiated in the celebration.

From Christine Ostle

Community Centre Coordinator Report – February 2010

Having moved houses over the summer I have had opportunity to set up: new systems for processing paperwork, new storage methods for various items and new patterns for executing tasks. There is newness in many different areas of my life.

What about you? Are you called to something new? Could you be called to be the new leader at Play Group or a new helper at Friendship Club? Is this the new ministry to which you are called?

There are two new projects that will soon get underway through the ministry of the Community Centre. Firstly, we are soon to have Job Seeker Volunteers working among us. Secondly, we will soon have small groups of people with intellectual disabilities using our facilities for short 4-6 week courses in life skills.

The New Year is already one month gone but it is not too late to make a change for something new this year.



Social Justice Week at Morialta

Beginning on Sunday 18 April

UnitingJustice Australia is the justice unit of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, pursuing national matters of social and economic justice, human rights, peace and the environment. It engages in advocacy and education and works collaboratively to communicate the Church's vision for a reconciled world.

Key Events

Sunday 18 April

9.30 am Worship

Preacher: Rev Elenie Poulos
The Aftermath of the Global Economic Crisis and its effect on people

11.00 am Sunday Forum

with Rev Elenie Poulos
Economy, work and sustainability for the common good in a time of economic crisis

Wednesday 21 April

7.45pm Evening Forum

with Rev Elenie Poulos and Professor Tina Dolgopol
Human Rights in Australia

Co-hosted by Evening Fellowship and the Social Justice Mission Ministry Team

Our Speakers

Reverend Elenie Poulos is a Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia. She was appointed National Director of *UnitingJustice* (The Assembly Social Justice Team) in 2002. Elenie is a member of the World Council of Churches' Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and is Moderator of the CCIA Working Group on Global Advocacy. Elenie is also actively engaged with the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) as Deputy Chair of Christian World Service (CWS) and a member of the Social Justice Network. She attends Pitt Street Uniting Church in Sydney. Elenie holds a BA (Hons) in linguistics and an MA in language in education, as well as a BTh (Theology). She is currently a doctoral student at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney.

Professor Tina Dolgopol is Director of Masters of Law and International Relations at the Flinders University's Law School. She was a Co-Chief Prosecutor at the Women's International War Crimes Trial, Tokyo 2000 and has worked with the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice to improve the gender provisions in the Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (1998-2000). From 1982 - 1987 she was the Director of the Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, at the International Commission of Jurists, Switzerland. Her research interests include women's rights, gender and the International Criminal Court, gender and peace agreements, women and armed conflict and the international protection of human rights.

Human Rights Evening Forum Wed 21 April 7.45pm

Why do we need to know more about human rights?

During the first half of 2009, the Australian Government ask an independent Committee chaired by Father Frank Brennan, a Jesuit priest and lawyer, to determine what Australians think about human rights. Specifically the Committee asked the Australian community three questions:

- Which human rights (including corresponding responsibilities) should be protected and promoted?
- Are these human rights currently sufficiently protected and promoted?
- How could Australia better protect and promote human rights?

The committee reported towards the end of 2009 but the Government is yet to act on its findings.

What are human rights?

Human rights are basic, universally accepted principles to guide the way that we treat each other. They describe what is necessary for each person to live a life of dignity to the fullness of their potential. Respect for human rights is needed to create a just world founded on a common humanity.

Are current human rights protections in Australia strong enough?

Some people argue that our strong democratic tradition and the independence of the courts make sure that our human rights are already protected. But democracy doesn't always work quickly enough to stop human rights breaches, or to help people whose rights have been breached.

How could a Federal Human Rights Act make a difference?

A human rights act, based on those rights described in the International Bill of Rights would be a national law clearly setting out the rights of all Australians. It would serve as a checklist for governments in formulating their policies and activities and for the courts when examining laws.

The human rights evening at Morialta on 21st April at 7.45pm aims to inform rather than direct. Speakers will present information and answer questions to assist you in making your own decision as to whether Australia needs a Human Rights Act.

Colin Cargill
Leader, Social Justice MMT



Our Resident Doves of Peace

Some time ago I happened to notice a black dove pick up a twig and fly up to a corner of the Church roof. That was when I saw the white dove. She was sitting in the gutter and was making a nest. Her partner, the black dove was helping.

The following week I looked for the birds and saw that the white dove was alone on the nest. I concluded that she must be sitting on an egg.

Some time later David Purling saw two white doves looking through the window at the Church entrance. Could they be mother and daughter? It seems that we have two resident little doves of peace. Very fitting for Morialta Uniting Church.



Photos by Brian Corrigan and David Purling representing the Social Justice Ministry Team

In *December's Vision* we showed "Unknown" under the poem on the final page. Diane has now provided a paper and information on the poet, Harold Thurman. We acknowledge his writing and share parts of the paper. The complete paper is available on request. It holds truths and continuing challenges for us as we move into 2010.

When the Song of the Angels is Stilled

Matthew 5:16-18

Howard Thurman may or may not be a familiar name to you. However, assuming you have heard of Martin Luther King, Jr. or Thomas Merton, then you would find Howard Thurman in and among their company. Howard Thurman was a spiritual mentor to King, particularly in introducing him to Gandhi and nonviolence, and alongside Merton, Thurman was one of the great mystics of the 20th century.

The grandson of slaves, Thurman grew to be one of the most eloquent and thoughtful preachers of his time. After serving as the dean of the chapel at Howard University, he surprised many by leaving his tenured post in 1944 to take on the challenge of building the nation's first intentionally interracial, interdenominational church in San Francisco—the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples. This was remarkably prophetic in a period when race relations were still quite strained, and religious differences were often pronounced. But that was his style—thinking ahead to a time beyond his own.

Howard Thurman's leadership was widely recognized back in the 1950s by those who sought progress in social relations in our country and throughout the world. In fact, Thurman came to disappoint many in the African American community, who anticipated that he would be the de facto "Moses" of the Civil Rights movement. But he chose a different course, as he left active involvement in the movement for the pursuit of deeper spirituality and mysticism.

But this wasn't a matter of choosing one over the other. For Thurman, social activism could only be sustained and nurtured by deep spiritual roots—something that King came to appreciate from Thurman. Instead of merely protesting what was wrong with society and fighting the institutions, Thurman sought to build a vision of the realm of God within those institutions that would have relevance to social concerns. As such, he was a voice in the wilderness on many occasions, even as he used various means to communicate his vision of the way things should be.

One of Howard Thurman's enduring legacies was his poetry—a medium that accompanied his body of prose that demonstrated over and over again the relationship he made between spiritual roots and a call to action to transform the world. Perhaps his best known piece was titled, "The Work of Christmas"—a Christmas

poem that is as prophetic to our times as it was in his day.

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.*

Imagine the implications of this simple poem in the context of the turmoil of the 1960s! That was Thurman's style and part of his genius.

This poem has meant a great deal to me over the years as I have sought to follow in Howard Thurman's steps—as one who saw the direct linkage between the wisdom of the ages and the present need to transform society. This has particular meaning to me this year, as we once again move beyond the beauty and ceremony of our Christmas celebrations and seek to understand the true purpose of what we're about as Christians.

You see, during the month of December I was disappointed once again by where so many hearts seem to lie. Over and over again, the voices of many prominent religious leaders were heard addressing the importance of upholding Christian traditions in mainstream America than focusing on the condition of our world and planet. On many occasions, the concern seemed to be the lack of respect Christians were receiving in the public square, at least compared to times past when a crèche was expected on every town green and Christmas carols were sung in every public school. The rallying cry of many was to site the faults of pluralism and secularism, while overlooking the fact that the Christian tradition itself often is lacking purpose and profundity, when nothing but ceremony seems to matter, and the problems of the world don't get addressed.

Who cares if we sing about angels and shepherds in the public square when we're at war and thousands are needlessly dying? What difference does it make that we love the Lord Jesus, when the suffering of the poor continues unabated? What's the point of retelling the story of the Magi, when the gifts of love, compassion, generosity, and kindness are in such short supply today? Do we really believe that God is more blessed by our public demonstrations of religiosity than by the true intentions of our hearts?

So we come to January and bid farewell to our manger scenes, Christmas ornaments, and holiday cards and wonder what will really change for us in the coming year, until we

unpack these festive adornments once again next season? What difference does it truly make that Christ has come into our world and the angels sing of his presence? What happens if the story grows so old and weary that no one really wants to recall it anymore? Is there nothing else to say? Is there nothing else to do?What now? What happens when the song of the angels is stilled?

Thurman's answer has always been: the work of Christmas begins. The work of Christmas begins.

What is that work? What is it that really makes a difference to a world that is tired of hearing this old, old story? As he said it, in echoing the words of Jesus: it is to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among brothers, and to make music in the heart.

So I will pose some questions to us all as we try to figure out where we go from here.

What follows then are the questions...

Who are the lost?

Who are the broken and the broken-hearted?

And finally, the work of Christmas includes making music in the heart. What can you do this year to lift your own soul and spirit so that music will begin to flow from your heart? What voices will you listen to who will brighten your day and bring comfort to your night? What angels will you hear when you dream and what songs will you sing when you arise? That is how we find healing in our own broken lives so that we can sense that God is real and that God is here.

That's what it is all about, isn't it? The story of Christmas is never complete until the work of Christmas begins. Howard Thurman knew that. Martin Luther King knew that. Thomas Merton knew that. Jesus knew that. And he knew the truth about us, who follow him.

You are the light of the world. ...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

That's what it's all about. That is what really matters.

If we set out to do this, if we do this work from one Christmas to another, if we shine the light of Christ in the shadows of the darkness of our world, then things will seem a bit brighter for everyone next year. Then the ceremony of Christmas will be welcomed by all, for the work of Christmas has brightened the world. And this story we tell will bring as much joy to each heart as it once did so long ago.

The Rev. Dr. Paul C. Hayes,
Noank Baptist Church, Noank CT 7 January 2007

An Atheist Banner

Early in 2009, TV news programs featured the famous red double-deck London buses carrying large banners, *There's Probably no God*. Watching, I felt confronted, uneasy.

Alexander McCall Smith, in his recent book, *Corduroy Mansions* is more positive and helpful as the following quotation shows. Two of his characters, Hugh and Barbara are talking about beliefs. The conversation is well worth thinking about.

(Hugh)

"I saw an advertisement on a bus yesterday," he said. "It was an advertisement for atheism. It said, 'There's probably no God.' It made me think."

Barbara had read about these advertisements but had not herself seen one. "I suppose everybody has the right to advertise a view point. Atheists. Religious people. It's the same right they're exercising."

"Yes," said Hugh. "But I wondered whether those advertisements were....well, were *kind*. I know that seems an odd word to use here but it's the word that came to me. Sometimes I think it's best not to voice doubts about beliefs that mean a great deal to someone else."

"Yes," Barbara said. "I agree. I suppose that being kind to one another includes not saying things you think may be true but which threaten to upset other people unduly. People may need their beliefs. For all I know, in their essence, in the heart of what they say, those beliefs may be expressing something that is very true – something that people really need to help them through life."

"Such as?"

"That we need to love one another. It might be that people need to believe that they are loved by some divine being because they get precious little love on this earth. Would you set out to shatter such a belief?"

A F Tideman

Gretta Vosper

With or Without God: Why the Way We Live is More Important than What we Believe

Tuesday April 20, 2010
7.30 pm

Venue: to be advised

Envisioning a future in which the Christian church plays a viable and transformative role in shaping society, Gretta Vosper argues that the heart of faith must undergo a radical change.

Vosper, founder of the Canadian Centre for Progressive Christianity and a minister in Toronto, believes that what will save the church is an emphasis on just and compassionate living – a new and wholly humanistic approach to religion, and a renewed church as a leader in ethics, fostering relationships, meaning and values that are solidly rooted in our own selves.

Visit hosted by Progressive Christianity Network of SA, and follows her keynote presentation at the Common Dreams 2 Conference in Melbourne.

GATEWAYS

The Gateways Group, 30-strong, began 2010 with a trip to Victor Harbor to enjoy the hospitality of Lesley and Arthur Tideman, and the group's delight in conversation, fun and fellowship. The view across Encounter Bay was, in one of its many faces, awe-inspiring, giving renewal to the spirit.

Gateways is a reading/discussion group open to all who are interested.

Currently the text is "The First Christmas" by Borg and Crossan, and the richness and challenge of the Christmas story is being explored.

Everyone is welcome!



paws for thought ...

Some times humans still surprise me. I know I shouldn't be - after all I am with Bruce pretty much all of the time, but even so. Take, for example, the trip I took to Tasmania at the beginning of the year.

We spent a little time at a place called Strahan, on the West Coast, and John, Christine, Anne and Bruce seemed to enjoy themselves. They didn't give me much time for resting. They always seemed to be walking. That was okay, but then we started this thing they called The Overland Track. I'm pretty fit. I walk almost every day, but this was something else. There were twelve humans including my four. The others were nice too. Over six days I think we walked over 70kms. Up and down hills, over rocks and roots, through rain and creeks, but they always seemed to be smiling.

I guess that was because after the day of hiking they walked into the hut and there was a hot drink and something to eat waiting for them. When they weren't walking they seemed to be eating.

Tasmania is picturesque.

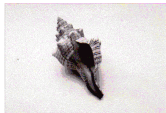
One day we went off the main track and climbed the highest mountain there.

There's so much more that I could tell you about, but there isn't any more room. Why not ask John, Christine, Anne or Bruce to tell you some more. Their memories aren't as good as mine, but they should remember some of the more important things.

Keely.



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Seaside Poem

Sand in the sandwiches,
 Sand in the tea.
 Flat, wet, running sand
 Down by the sea.
 Pools full of seaweed
 Shells and stones.
 Damp bathing suits
 And ice cream cones.
 Waters for splashing,
 Sand is for play.
 A day by the sea
 Is the best kind of day.

Thanks from Jill and Neville Pope

Neville & Jill Pope thank the members of Morialta for their support during their recent hospitalisations and recovery period. They would particularly like to acknowledge the many visits from Diane and David. When we are well, we tend to forget the amount of hospital visiting our ministers fit into their demanding roles. Neville and Jill are both well on the road to recovery. Jill is back at work but has a few weeks yet before everything is back to normal. Neville is almost back to normal activity.



EVENING FELLOWSHIP CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

The year finished with fine fare and friendships.



Christmas Bowl Badge Day



Morialta collectors were out in force in the city.

In our congregation, giving totalled \$2424.40.

Thanks to all those who gave so generously. This goes with our prayers as we recall the projects mentioned back in December: health kits and care following births in Gaza; food, medicine, etc in Darfur, Sudan; nutritious food for Burmese refugees; hand dug water wells in Ethiopia

Farewell John & Glad



On 14 February we celebrated John Grooms' 32 years of membership at Newton and Morialta, and reluctantly farewelled him with our love and good wishes. As John has said, "time flies!" To be closer to home, John is transferring to Tusmore Park UC, which will be part of the new Burnside City Church. We enjoyed the opportunity for Morning Tea with John.

Glad joined in Morning Tea along with Di and Ken.

Glad goes with our love and good wishes to to worship at Resthaven, Leabrook.



FOUND

Pair of good leather gloves – left in the church at Christmas.

Inquire at the church office.

It's always special, in the slower pace of the holidays, with time for relaxation and renewal. We revisit some of it here.

On 17 January we thought about a picnic, its preparation, food for the body and the soul.

We took time to hear stories.

There was a time when Jesus fed a whole crowd

All I had was a basket,
enough to feed my family,
and no more besides.
A fish or two and fresh bread,
and before my eyes,
and the eyes of several thousand
others,
we feasted together
on a blessing
made real before us.
An abundance of heaven,
from the meagreness of earth.
This is love's extravagance.

One day, there was a wedding feast in the town of Cana –

All we had left were four pitchers.
The smell of the wine was rich from
within,
but they were empty,
the wine partied away.
But then glasses were filled

with new wine, rich and mature.
The mutterings about thirst
grew into congratulations on
quality.
The wine was good,
and plentiful,
but the taste was of heaven.
It was an abundance of blessing.

On the night he was betrayed, Jesus gathered with some of his closest friends –

All we had was Passover bread,
unleavened and dry.
Yet as it snapped in two
at the hands of the Saviour,
the abundance of heaven exploded
with crumbs.
The truth poured out
of how expensive love is.
Not just this once,
but every time it is done:
the extravagant cost and calling of
love
for each of us.
A story of God's abundant love
through death ... to life.

**God, help us to know your gifts of love
and to share them with all the world.**

The story is told of a woman who recognized Jesus as God's greatest gift –

There was a time when the perfume I
carried
was not in flowers or blossom, but in
a bottle.
All I had was a single bottle of
perfume.
Expensive?
Certainly.
And I poured it and poured it,
and kept on pouring it,
as mouths fell open
and a hush filled the room,
taunted by the perfume's aroma
that danced within it.
Perfume that surrounded and
caressed us
like the scent of spreading
wildflowers
or the aroma of the bush in the first
rain.
It was a moment from heaven,
for him,
for me.
A picture of the overwhelming grace
that is our God's.

On 24 January we worshipped in synagogue format and with David presenting as the Rabbi, donning the Kippa and Tallit or prayer shawl, and reading from a scroll.



He gave meaning to the Nehemiah passage, 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10 which relates how the exiles who returned to Jerusalem hear the word not only read, but also interpreted so that it can be understood.

Then we were led to reflect...



**'We believe in life before death'
(Christian Aid)**

'Jesus was a radical'

'When I feed the poor they call me a saint; when I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist'



You are wonderful, amazing, loved, valued, unique. God made you that way'

And we listened to Martin Luther King's "I have a dream"



Prayer of dedication

O Great Dreamer:
inspire us in your ways, that in our imaginings, hopes, and prayers, we become the fulfilment of all that is possible in our world
our neighbourhood,
this place,
and in each of us.

Prayers of the people

We dream of a world
where everyone has enough
and pray that we might live simply and justly
to create an equal distribution
of your goodness.

We imagine creation in all its beauty,
and pray we will walk lightly on this earth
living as co-creators
and caretakers of your gift.

We envision inclusive circles of dialogue,
holy conversation of study
and prayer that inspire
inquiring minds and discerning hearts
in all of us.

We picture a place of hospitality,
and pray
that we will respond compassionately
as we welcome in
the brokenness of our world.



Do you remember the children's story on Christmas Day of Applesauce and the Christmas miracle?

Then Joe opened the shed door and he and Marigold walked towards their visitors. Marigold carried a bundle in her arms and she and Joe were smiling as if they had received the best gift of all.

..... Applesauce inched closer – there on the hay was a baby!

..... On that orange summer evening, tiger-striped with blackened trees, Applesauce remembered the words of an owl ... and let Christmas fill her heart.

We see the miracle of Christmas in all sorts of people, in the way they show love and share love.



GOD'S EXTRAVAGANCE

As we move through God's world we see the wonder of God's extravagance in nature. We go for a walk along the river, for a swim at the beach or for a picnic in the hills, and we can be filled with the beauty of the world around us, the grandeur of the rock face rising up above us, the dancing of the dappled light shining through the trees, the surprise flash of colour as a rosella flies by, the gently touch of a cooling breeze. the sounds and the smells of the bush around us fill us with delight and a sense of God's creative power.



Rachelle Reports

more from the children than we gave....



This January I went to Cambodia for two weeks to work in an orphanage just out of the capital, Phnom Penh. The team I went with consisted of myself and eleven other university students from around Adelaide, and a carpenter, aged between 18 and 24. While at Sovanapoom Care orphanage we helped out in practical ways such as moving bricks, shovelling dirt to level the ground, painting furniture and cleaning out a newly built apartment house, as well as entertaining and teaching the children. It was wonderful to see the children's love of God, their joy in worship, and their heart for helping out (we had some children smaller than me carrying twice as many bricks!).

The orphanage felt like one big family and we were warmly welcomed. Though most of us got sick, we all enjoyed the experience and treasure the memories that we've made. At times I felt like we received more from the children than we gave.

I went on this missions exposure trip to explore if overseas mission was something that I could do, and more importantly if it was something that God was calling me to. Though I haven't felt that I've heard a particular call from God yet, I have been reassured to find out that I could certainly serve Him somewhere overseas again.

Dilemmas of the wedding banquet

From the Monday 21 September '09 edition of *The Transit Lounge*

Cath James

The traditional wedding reception is structured around the food, with the promise of dessert after the speeches. The food at weddings speaks volumes: Have they paid a lot of money for it? Is it chicken or beef? Are the servings so large that most leave food on their plates? Food in a wealthy country is often not about sustenance, but it says a lot about our culture and what we value.

A few years ago I went to a wedding where the bride and groom had asked people to bring a dish of food as their wedding present. I wondered what could I make that would be a suitable gift for two people I loved? Something beautiful? Something time consuming? Something expensive? Something that tasted good? Something special? What sort of food would be appropriate?

At my own wedding reception, one of my key concerns was whether all the diverse people coming together would have a good time. A key answer to this concern was to make sure the food was good. Being on a very tight student budget, we decided we would make the food for our wedding as a way of being able to afford to provide good food for our friends and family.

Thinking about my friends' wedding, I was reminded of the Agape meal—a tradition of the early Christians to come together to celebrate with food and find a sense of community. The informal church I attend always begins with a meal and sharing of our lives together. The simple act of coming together in this way allows us to enter into a deeper space when sharing together in worship.

At Easter, my family takes part in the Jewish tradition of the Haggadah feast. We do this as a ritualised meal to remember what Jesus would have gone through on the night he was betrayed.

The time I spend in the preparation of food for these experiences is also a key part of the experience. I want to prepare food that doesn't exclude people on the basis of their dietary requirements. At Christmas and at Easter I make things I don't make at any other time of the year. During Lent I give up chocolate and then celebrate it on Easter day. This ritualisation of food and only having food at certain times helps to transform what could otherwise be very mundane into something special and sacred.

My betrothed friends and I share a common love of gardening and vegetarian cooking. I wanted the food to also reflect something of our relationship and of the beauty we both find in the natural world. That beauty is in simple things like the luminous colour of fruit and flowers, the texture of moss and the intricacy of the lines on a rock.

I feel a profound sense of being connected to God when I have time to notice the incredible beauty of those everyday things around me. Preparing food that has beautiful colours and with the added senses of smell and taste is a very spiritual experience.

When the day of their wedding arrived I picked small tomatoes from the garden—yellow and red, shaped like pears. I picked a lettuce that blended from green to red. I purchased a jar of expensive marinated feta which I crave not only because it's delicious but because it's marked in my mind as something to only have on special occasions.

My husband and I spent the day together making lots of small bundles of feta, pumpkin and pine nuts in filo pastry and painstakingly shaping them into flowers.

When we arrived at the wedding reception, our contribution was taken from us and we had an informal time of drinks and finger food and pleasantries. When at last it was time for our table to go up and select from the smorgasboard it was almost overwhelming. I wanted to sample something of everything, something of all the love that people had given to this couple, something of the special and individual contributions that people made. In the end, I had to content myself with choosing what I could fit on my plate.

When we all came back to our table, all we could talk about was the food—exchanging portions of spectacular stuffed mushrooms and rice paper rolls. We all wanted to share in the experience as much as we could.

Perhaps it was that there was commonality already there in our love of food, but the common act of sharing and celebrating what we had prepared had a profound effect on the sense of community we experienced that night. No matter how much love and thought I poured into my own culinary offering, it was the coming together and sharing that was the real gift of love.

Cath James is the environmental project officer for the Justice & Mission Unit of the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria & Tasmania.

Ed: This seemed to resonate with the celebration and food which we enjoy together at Morialta and in our relationships.



Together, we can
make a difference!

Help Uniting Care overcome poverty and disadvantage.

21 February 2010
8.30 to 9.30am



I came across this picture and it got me thinking. It is a picture taken when I was about 12 years old, so that would make it about 1960. It is taken at Mt Macedon near Melbourne.

I remember going to an Easter Camp there. What fun we had and how our friendship and sense of fellowship grew with a great leader and holding hands and singing songs around the camp fire. We also had a wonderful time of worship at the above cross.

I found myself reflecting over the years and thinking "Gee I've actually been through quite a number of Easters" "Have I grown in my faith

over the years?" "What's different now to when that picture was taken?"

Pictures can help to bring us to think about "How beautiful the world is around us"

This Lent, the Library will again have lots of different resources for you to have a look at and to borrow. So come in and have a browse and on behalf of the Library Committee I wish you a Lenten/Easter time which is filled with moments of joy and reflection and wonderment.

Lorraine Powers



For those doing *Lenten Studies* I have found that "*The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*" is a good reference book to use to look up some of those tricky questions.

Interesting websites I have found of late are:

www.questia.com/read/93561612 which allows you to read a book called "Hebrew Religion to the Establishment of Judaism under Ezra by W.E. Addis copyright 1906. It is interesting in that it tells you all about Semitic peoples and their beliefs which all happens before the Exodus.

BiblePlaces.com
A good place to look at pictures.

An interesting book of fiction I have nearly finished reading is "*Where God was born*" by Bruce Feiler.

The author travels ten thousand miles through the Middle East (some of which is through war torn and dangerous parts) to examine the question:
Is religion tearing us apart . . . or can it bring us together?

An excerpt ... "After more than a year of travelling through some of the most extreme places of religious fundamentalism, I determined that the Hebrew Bible, at least, cannot be read as endorsing the idea that one group of people has exclusive claim to God. In fact from Creation to Jonah to Second Isaiah, the text explicitly endorses the opposite idea, that God embraces any people who share his moral vision, no matter their identity."

new books

P. D. James
The Private Patient - Crime Fiction

Michael Moran
A Country in the Moon - Travel

Hugh Mackay
Winter Close - a novel

A. McCall Smith
La's Orchestra Saves the World

A. McCall Smith
Tea Time for the Traditionally Built

Elizabeth Gilbert
Committed - Author of Eat Pray Love

Tracy Chevalier
Remarkable Creatures Author of Girl with the Pearl Earring

What is KCO?

From the UC Presbytery and Synod website



KCONIA UNITED

March 13-14
The Barossa Valley Tourist Park
Penrice Road, Nuriootpa

2010 Theme: KCONIA United!

KCO is an overnight camp for kids 7-12 years of age.

At KCO kids enjoy a wide range of performances, activities, games, worship & music, based around a central theme. Often the theme aims to teach the campers about Jesus' life & teachings, in a manner that is understandable, appropriate to their context &, of course, incredibly fun.

Our theme this year is "KCONIA United". Fly to KCONIA United and discover a universe of faith, fun and friendship. Celebrate community united under the cross of Jesus. Experience life together as God's people, encouraging and serving others.

Morialta's KCO Contingent

Morialta's contingent for KCO will include leaders and a group of about 10 children. Craig Mackenzie is our Coordinator and would be pleased to give information if you are interested to share in this, or just to know more.

Organized by the Children & Young Families MMT, this continues to be a fantastic experience for Morialta's children. As KCO's Mission statement says:.....*this will provide experience of Christian community and diversity, growing faith as together we experience belonging, believing, growing and sharing*

Please hold Craig, other leaders and our children in your prayers.

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Editor: Mary Thornley
Graphic Design: Val Di Girolamo



We pray for those who long for food enough to eat, shelter to call home, adequate education and access to health care; through our simple living and generous giving **may their nets be filled.**

We pray for those who look for security in the midst of violence and civil unrest, for freedom of choice in how they live, and freedom to speak out against oppression; through our commitment to peace and justice **may their nets be filled.**

Diary Dates

Tues 16 February to Wed 14 April	Rev David Purling on leave
Sun 21 February 8.30 am	Pancake Breakfast
Fri 26—Sat 27 February	Presbytery Meeting
Tues 9—Mon 22 March 5.30 pm	Netball Club's Invitation to view training and share BBQ
Sun 28 March 9.30 am	Combined Service and Annual General Meeting of the Congregation
Mon 29 March	Holy Week begins
Thurs 1 April 6.30 pm 7.15 pm	Lenten Meal Tenebrae
Fri 2 April 9.30 am	Good Friday - Worship
Sun 4 April 9.30 am	Easter Sunday—Worship

Acknowledgements

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Deadline for April Edition
1st April 2010

If you would like to contribute an item, please send *unformatted* as Word documents either:
by email to the Vision Receiver, Sharon Mackenzie, (craig_sharon@picknowl.com.au).

Please do not format or use other software

OR

In hard copy via the Vision pigeon-hole – please allow more lead time for word processing.

To discuss ideas for Vision articles contact the editor.

God provides abundantly.
We will live without fear.
God has filled our nets to bursting.
We will live in joyful gratitude.
God has a great purpose for us all.
We will follow God's lead.
Let us trust God who has been ever steadfast.
We will be bold and answer God's call.
Go in God.
Amen.

Remember to Recycle this publication



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