

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

October 2022

Morialta Uniting Church—follow us on Facebook or check out our website at www.morialtauca.org.au

Welcome to our October edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

This month we feature an article about prayer and how we pray. We also bring you a second article about “The UCA at work” – about things churches like Morialta should consider doing to reduce our carbon footprint.

We also have two eulogies – Barb Sullivan and Mary Barrie, both of whom were very valued at Morialta.

We have more updates on "Spring into Action".

There is also news from Fellowship, some pictures from Guess Who's Coming to Lunch and a number of articles about life at Morialta and beyond.

The cut-off date for the November edition will be **28th October**. Either drop a copy in to Nicole at the Office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or snout-n-about@bigpond.com

Go well.

Making darkness and silence your friends

Adapted from an article by Vance Morgan on patheos.com/blogs/freelancechristianity

Hello darkness, my old friend, I've come to talk to you again.
“The Sound of Silence”

Some time ago I was listening to our local National Public Radio station in the car and I heard a brief piece about “Disturbed,” a heavy metal band that had just received its second Grammy nomination. Although my knowledge of contemporary heavy metal is non-existent, their second nomination was for their acoustic cover of a song that was a central tune of my youth: Simon and Garfunkel’s “The Sound of Silence” so I had to listen.

While a remake of their iconic masterpiece is close to sacrilegious, the intensity and power of Disturbed’s version was inescapable – “chilling and magnificent.”

Singing along, and being a trained cantor, I was overwhelmed with emotion listening to the way my vocals sounded in that beautiful bed of music. It was really overwhelming.

I have been reminded of this story many times when I am teaching and discussing questions about how human beings are to think about ‘what is greater than us’, or ‘is there anything greater than us, and if so, what are the implications?’ Many of my students come from religious backgrounds, but have never critically analysed what is going on when we attempt to establish a line of communication with what is greater than us.

These attempts are usually called prayer; part of worship in each of the great monotheistic religions. However, attempts to make contact with God often get exactly what Paul Simon’s lyrics describe – the sound of silence.

I grew up in a prayer-obsessed world; especially Wednesday nights. We didn’t sing on Wednesday nights – people gave testimonies, and then we prayed. For a very, very, VERY long time. It was as if the intent was apparently to wear God down. Not that the things being asked for were unimportant – “Please heal Y of diabetes,” “Please help Z find a job” – but the tone was often petulantly childish, demanding.

How to pray was a mystery to me – I recall my mother saying frequently that I should just talk to God the same way I talked to her. That never struck me as one of my mother’s better pieces of advice. I did learn how to make up a convincing sounding prayer, but it just never seemed to go past the ceiling.

The best advice I ever received concerning prayer came from my life partner. In response to one of my frequent complaints about divine silence as a “response” to prayer, Jeanne said “Vance, for you thinking is praying.” It has taken me many years to recognize just how right she was.

What if prayer is not something the person of faith is supposed to do? What if prayer is something that we are called to be? Being a prayer is a matter of learning to recognize and trust the places where the divine is most likely to be found – in myself and in others – in those thin places where the barrier between human and divine dissolves. And people of the book should know this – it’s right there, both in the Jewish scriptures and the New Testament. Where is the divine to be found?

It is not too mysterious, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven... nor is it beyond the sea... But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

If prayer is a call for the divine to enter the world, we need to be attentive to where that might be happening – in us and around us. It probably will not be where we expect. As Paul Simon wrote “The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls.”



Vance Morgan is Professor of Philosophy at Providence College, Marquette University, Rhode Island, with expertise in Ethics, Early Modern Philosophy and Philosophy of Knowledge.

Spring into Action

Pathway to Renewal and the Future

We recount the Journey so far as this edition of Vision coincides with the Meeting of the Congregation.

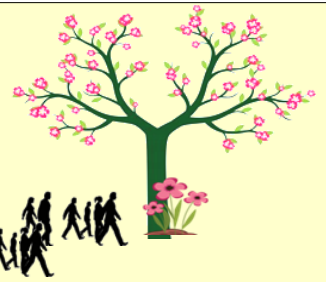
- **Meeting of Congregation 3 April 2022.** Budget presentation showed a projected deficit in excess of \$50,000. After much discussion a Proposal was accepted by Consensus:

that we go forward in faith with the proposed budget, and that Council will undertake a stewardship program, engage the congregation in visioning Mission and resources required, and critically examine the budget to reduce expenditure to achieve a sustainable budget.

“..... to address the deficit and to examine ways of reducing and managing it.”

- **Appointment of Working Group** with a broad brief:
- Membership appointed to the Working Group were: Bruce Ind, Rev Bob Hutchinson, Chris Ayles, Lachlan Mackenzie, Mary Thornley. The group began its task of teasing out the scope of the investigation, the matters to be addressed, the methodology to be used, the introductory stages of information and planning documents, and allowing for steps to evolve and worthwhile initiatives to be undertaken. The overall shaping of the interaction with the Congregation was expressed in a schedule which addressed planned foci in Worship and Seasons, Council’s calendar, and Meetings of the Congregation.
- **Consultation 1**, the first interaction with the Congregation, live-streamed with strong AV support, firstly provided background information, including resourcing issues, reductions and successes in church life, and significant development in on-line ministry. Six table groups gathered much information about members’ relationships with Morialta, plus very importantly, wide-ranging ideas and suggestions for the future and for addressing the financial challenge.
- **Collation and analysis of over 150 suggestions**, which were synthesised into Focus areas to assist in formulating Recommendations, and also in addressing the challenging matter of resources.
- Meanwhile – **Stewardship of Giving and Service**. This phase was introduced in Worship Services and ‘unpacked’ in the Message/Sermon with exploration of Giving financially and also Giving in service, recognising the challenges facing us as a predominantly senior congregation and in the current social context where the church is no longer the social hub for young people.
- **Report to Church Council with Appendix, Recommendations** – The Report was received and endorsed for presentation to the Congregation, noting that it brought a challenge which was prompted by a strong sense of need to properly explore future possibilities and move forward, and perhaps to *flesh out* what had been presented as Scenario 2.
- **The Report included reference to the most frequently occurring suggestions** which expressed key desires of the church community. These were summarised in five dot points.

- Keep Morialta Uniting Church as a worshipping community and try to grow it.
- Define Morialta Uniting Church as a progressive, spacious church with a strong social justice ethic that provides a “home” for people from a wide range of social groupings and promote ourselves vigorously as such.
- Continue using our strong audio/visual commitment to provide high quality worship experience and other events to those unable to attend our centre in person.
- Make more income-generating use of our physical property.
- Be a focal point of and resource for our local community.



- **The Report questioned: *Who are we? What is our Core Ministry?*** In answering it referred to Morialta’s Vision Statement and a further elaboration in the Stewardship Brochure.

Vision Statement - Morialta Uniting Church seeks to be an inclusive community who hold to the way of Jesus, expressed through love, service and hospitality. We offer, for all ages, learning opportunities, spiritual expression, action for justice, and social connection. We understand the Chapel Street property to be a community resource.



Stewardship Brochure - We profess Morialta UC to be a Christian church which is progressive, spacious, liberal, welcoming, embracing, holistic and allowing questions rather than giving answers, and which can offer a haven for those who can no longer subscribe to a theology that dictates what we should and should not believe, and who we should and should not accept.

- **Core Ministries** – A need for clarity in Morialta’s Ministry led to identifying six areas of ministry. These were endorsed by Council for consideration by the Congregation.



WORSHIP and SPIRITUALITY
Emphasis and practices which nurture a spiritual attitude and approach

ON-LINE MINISTRY
Continuing current streaming of Worship and expanding on-line ministry formats

SENIORS
Worship and activities

CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS
Worship and activities

MULTI-FAITH
Initiatives and connections

ACTIONS FOR JUSTICE
Refugees, Recent Arrivals, LGBTIQA, and other groups in need
Initiatives and opportunities for support and engagement

- **Nineteen further Recommendations** were endorsed by Church Council for distribution and consideration at today’s Meeting of the Congregation, 9 October.
- **Response Paper relating to Recommendations** - Members will be asked to indicate on the Response Paper those Focus areas in which they are willing to work, advise, or participate in future developments.
- **The paucity of Human Resources to action Mission** has been addressed throughout the discernment process, and it will be further addressed in the Meeting of the Congregation with invitation and encouragement to commit to participation in team leadership or membership, and activities. Members will be requested to indicate willingness and interest on a response paper.
- **In Stewardship thus far** there have been some generous responses, both in weekly giving and one-off gifts, but there continue to be opportunities for further responses. In the challenge of our financial picture stewardship will continue to be a lively issue. It is a need which should go hand-in-hand with initiatives to increase income.

We recall the quote:
“Our future is as important as our history”.
We work to make this so.



We commend ...Morialta’s
Pathway to Renewal and the Future.

We acknowledge the very warm response and hopefulness of the Congregation thus far.

We invite everyone..... to continue to consider... how you can help in the journey to make this happen.

Barbara June Sullivan 1929 - 2022

Barbara June Sullivan (nee O'Connor) was born on the 25th April 1929. She grew up in Port Lincoln where she attended Primary School and one year of High School until her family moved to Adelaide. Barb never liked school so she left soon after moving to Adelaide and began her working life.



She began work as a salesgirl with Myers, before moving to Wilkins, who were grocers, to look after the postage and invoices. Her next job was with her future husband's brother (Gil Sullivan), who had a pottery business. When the business closed, she worked for Gil's brother, Len, and "married the boss" at age 21.

Barb and Len began married life in 1950 in a flat at Norwood, then moved to her parents' house in Halifax Street before buying a house at Wayville. Daughter Susan was born while they were at Norwood and sons Gil and Jimmy were born while living at Wayville. They then moved to Vale Park but sadly Len had developed cancer and died in 1966 at a relatively young age. Barb remarried but, in her words, "it was a disaster and only lasted 6 months". After moving in with son Gil and his family at Parafield Gardens she moved to her home of 20 years in Ross Road, Magill.

After Len's death Barb returned to the workforce and enjoyed a varied working life which included butcher's assistant at the Lazy Lamb, manager of Chicken Chef on Main North Road and Greenhill Road and receptionist and manager of the Men's

Shop for Ferris Trabilis Hairdresser. From there Barb semi-retired, but continued doing babysitting as babies and young children were always one of her great loves.

Barb was born an Anglican and was involved in the life of various churches all her life. When son Gil and his family began worshipping at Magill – now Morialta – in the mid 1970's Barb joined them.

She was very much a 'people person' but she also enjoyed gardening, craft work, knitting and going for long walks while she was able.

Barb enjoyed her life at Morialta UC which very much revolved around children. She ran the crèche when the Community Classes Program was active and at its peak there were up to 20 children in the creche each Tuesday. Barb also cooked for, and worked at, Coffee Corner from its inception and was involved in the Friday Kids' Club with Marion Beard and Lorraine Powers when grandchildren Josh and Alicia attended. For Barb, family – her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren – were very special and meant everything to her.

In her own written story Barb spoke of how she valued her time at Morialta greatly, especially the many friendships she made. But she was also very valued in return by her many friends and contacts in the Morialta community and beyond. Barb had "indomitable spirit" and will be remembered with love for her care, laughter and maybe just a little cheekiness.

Adapted from her own story, her children's stories and memories of friends.

Congratulations!

We send our very best wishes to Lachlan and Nicole, who welcomed Liam Benjamin into their family in September.

We wish them well as they embark on the exciting, and sometimes challenging, journey together as a new family!



Life is better with friends

From Community First

Community First needs Community Friends to support their work in communities across Australia.

Community First is a First Nations Community Development and Research Organisation that is designed to support local initiatives from communities across Australia. They promote the skills, talents and cultural strength of First Nations people, and facilitate activities that will lead to positive changes for their communities. They acknowledge the responsibility of all Australians to contribute to a more just and equitable world for First Nations people.

The cost to fund a community project is rising every year. Regularly scheduled funds minimise administrative costs and allow planning for the future to maximise impact.



Community Friends make an enormous difference – empowering communities to bring positive long-term and sustainable change to the lives of present and future generations.

A Community Friend makes a nominated monthly contribution to support First Nations' people to access the opportunities they seek to solve their own challenges. Gifts from Community Friends are processed on the 20th of each month (or the next working day) and are tax deductible. You choose the amount you'd like to give each month - which you can change or cancel in writing at any time. And at the end of the financial year, we send a summarised receipt of all your regular gifts.

You can read more about the work of Community First and how to support their work at <https://www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/>



Adelaide Male Voice Choir at Morialta

Community Building & Fundraising Team

Adelaide Male Voice Choir will be presenting a concert at Morialta Uniting Church at 2.00pm on **Sunday 16th October**. The concert will include opera choruses and popular songs plus a cello solo by Julian Leske accompanied by Nikolai Leske at the piano. Tea and coffee will be available after the concert.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased from the church office, or online at trybooking.com/CCMYN. Limited tickets will also be available at the door.

Proceeds will be shared with AMVC and if we all bring one friend – it will be a great success!

‘Morialta has talent’

From Ruth Dunning

I've shown "Vision" to friends and relatives and they all comment on what a wonderful publication it is – in fact some of them, who also watch the Morialta service, are quite envious of the number of talented people we still have to lead in our services.

I am amazed at modern technology when I look at the professional newsletter (and in colour) that Sharon puts out. I remember when I did the newsletter and orders of service for eight years. I used stencils on a long carriage typewriter. I've kept a few and would get a laugh if I looked at them now!!



Heather Mary Barrie 1924 - 2022

Adapted from an article by Jill Kerr

Mary Barrie was born in 1924 in Boolaroo Centre, where she and her brother Jim lived with their parents on a small mixed farm – mainly wheat and sheep. Mary remembered childhood as a happy time, even though poor health and the distance to school meant she did correspondence lessons at home.

During the war the family moved into Orroroo and Mary attended the local Methodist church. She joined Comrades and the choir, as well as taking up tennis and golf. Mary also relieved at the hospital as a cook and worked at Fogden's Drapery shop.

Mary was always a keen traveller and “only worked so that she could travel.” Her first adventure was with her friend Joan Hall – travelling to St Vincent's Gulf, the Grampians, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. By 1951 they had saved up enough money to travel overseas on a working holiday. On arriving in London, they explored the city and Mary worked in Woolworths for 6 months to earn money for more travel. When in London, she was a regular at the Methodist Central Hall. As well as bus trips, they also hitchhiked through the south of England, staying in youth hostels and making lots of friends. Mary picked strawberries in Kent and Sussex, tatties in Yorkshire, stayed in agricultural camps and “visited all sorts of churches”. She explored Edinburgh, Glasgow and her family roots in Ayrshire.

A highlight of her travels was the Coronation of the late Queen Elizabeth II. Joan and Mary had seats near Green Park and Mary remembered the crowds, the decorations, the rain, the parade and seeing Queen Salote of Tonga and the Queen Mother.

Mary returned home by boat at the end of 1953 and back to Orroroo and the draper's shop. But she immediately set about saving, this time to travel around Australia. The age of air travel had begun and her first flight was to Cairns in 1955, followed by a trip to Noumea with friend Margaret.

In 1958 Mary moved to Magill with her parents and they settled in Jervis Avenue. On the first Sunday Mary and her mother walked up to the Magill Methodist Church – her mum joined the Guild and Mary joined the choir and became a Sunday School teacher.

Mary combined work in Woolworths on Rundle Street and holiday travel for the next 11 years with trips to Alice Springs and Ayers Rock, Tasmania and New Zealand. Mary then worked at Kahlyn Hospital as a cook for 12 years but managed to travel to Canada with two friends.

In 1988 Mary retired and moved to the ACH village in Magill. She took up executive positions in the Women's Fellowship, was an elder for many years, was a member of the Australian Church Women, and, for 22 years, was Branch Treasurer of the local Royal District Nursing Service.

But while Mary may have retired from paid work, she had by no means retired from travelling. In 1989 she travelled for three months through Europe, England and Scotland and in 1995 took “My last big trip” with her nephew, Bill, in a hire-car around Britain, staying in B&Bs. Later trips included Western Australia, Queensland and the Ghan to Darwin. Her final travel ventures were listening at “Pot Luck” teas to the travels of others.

Mary's final years were spent at the Lutheran Homes in Glynde and she will be remembered not just for her keen interest in travel and people, but as a person always willing to ‘dig in’ and ‘help out’. Vale Mary

Guess who came to lunch!



Many thanks to Anne for organizing the lunch schedule for this year and to Bruce and Anne for welcoming a large group to their home for lunch!

Diners were also hosted by Rhonda, Jenny S, and Mandy W.

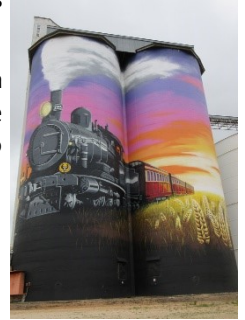
Thanks to all the cooks - it sounds like a good time was enjoyed by everyone who participated!



Fellowship news

Our Speaker in September was Maureen Speed, who talked to us about her experiences as a farmer's wife on the West Coast in the 1960s - 1980s. After graduating with a teaching degree she was sent to Tumbly Bay School with the intention of only staying one year. However, she met and married a farmer, so her stay was much longer. Maureen told us of the hardships of farming and raising a family with 4 children, no electricity, and water only when it rained, and the circumstances of having to move away after difficult times. As most of us are city people, this was fascinating to hear about - especially as the times (1960s to 1980s) are in our memory!

Our next meeting is on Thursday, 20th October commencing at 10am. Arlene and Kath are showing us photos of silo art in the mid-north of South Australia.



Refugee Week continues around the year for refugees

Adapted from an article in the Conversation by Betina Szkudlarek, Associate Professor in Management, University of Sydney Business School and Jeannie Eun Su Lee, Lecturer in Management, Newcastle Business School.

Refugee Week is over and for many the celebration would have been one-off. News outlets have already moved on to cover a fresh set of stories. But for refugees, the week is but one in a continuing struggle as they face the challenge of rebuilding their lives and gaining some sense of stability and normality – things most people take for granted.

Many of us think of donations as the only way we can really contribute to addressing socially pressing matters. However, from conversational English to professional support, and even direct engagement in resettlement, the opportunities we have at our disposal are numerous, and every single person can make a difference.

The Australian people are known for their generosity to those in need, but our empathy tends to be short-lived. Yet, it is precisely in the aftermath of major crises that refugees need us most.

One of the easiest ways to support refugees is to volunteer our time. Many non-profit organisations and community groups around the country seek volunteers' support and expertise. An example of a specific contribution that can be made is offering conversational language mentoring. Language proficiency is one of the key enablers of full social and economic integration, and simple coffee catch-ups to provide an opportunity to discuss daily matters can aid refugees in advancing their English proficiency, learning more about the country, and building new social connections. In fact the line between mentor and mentee quickly becomes blurred in such a relationship.

A step further along from language mentoring is professional support. Most refugees do not know the nuances of the local labour market and the professional and occupational prerequisites needed to move into Australian workplaces. Connecting with refugees and supporting them in the development of skills such as resumé writing and job interview conventions can be invaluable for many new Australians, who often struggle to gain meaningful employment in their receiving country.

Many Australian workplaces are closed to refugees because around 80 per cent of openings are not being publicly advertised. Opening doors – even a little – can mean an opportunity to rebuild lives, support families, and advance the wellbeing of people seeking safety in our country.

Another way to be involved beyond Refugee Week is by supporting businesses run by refugees. Many of these are small enterprises creating a variety of consumer goods and providing services to the local communities. *WelcomeMerchant* (<https://welcomemerchant.com/sa/>) has a directory of refugee-owned businesses across the country for those interested in supporting talented and motivated entrepreneurs from a refugee background.

Finally, Australia's new refugee sponsorship program enables citizens to become a part of a community that engages in resettling refugees. Multiple groups of like-minded people join forces to provide an opportunity for safe relocation for those who need it most.

As we enter the second half of the year, possibly having donated a few more dollars after being urged to do so by the end-of-financial-year appeals from numerous charities, let's not forget that we all can continue to make a difference. Our empathy and engagement are needed today, tomorrow, and every other day of the year.



The preferred spiritual practices of Australians

From National Church Life Survey (NCLS)

The 2021 Australian Community Survey conducted by NCLS research investigated Australians preferred spiritual practices.

When provided with a list of choices of spiritual practices, and asked which appealed to them, just over half (52%) selected being in nature or the outdoors as their top preference.

A similar result was found in the previous year (2020 ACS) following fires and during a time also impacted by the pandemic.



The results suggest that being outside in natural surroundings connects many Australians to a sense of spirituality. Recently highlighted during COVID lockdowns, was the priority given to spending some time

each day exercising or in recreation activities outdoors, as an effective way to support wellbeing.

The findings may reinforce and perhaps deepen the significance of spending time in nature, as a practice that not only supports wellbeing, but also lifts one's spirits or connects Australians to a deeper sense of their personal spirituality.

Just under half (49%) also ticked listening to music that moves them or lifts their spirits as an important spiritual practice, followed by prayer, meditation or mindfulness practices (32%).

Other more structured religious activities, such as attending religious services, was selected by 18%, followed by religious

or spiritual reading (16%), watching/listening to religious/spiritual talks or podcasts (12%) and small social groups (9%).

A previous survey in 2020 monitored the importance of spiritual practices during a time of crisis.

In answer to the question "How important do you think spiritual practices are to support people's well-being?" – 34% replied very important, 34% fairly important and 15% replied not important at all.

When asked if they had drawn on any spiritual practices during the bushfires and COVID crises, 55% replied no and 45% replied yes. Of those who replied yes, one third had increased their spiritual practices, about tenth had reduced their spiritual practices and the rest registered no change.

Interestingly across a range of spiritual practices, people had increased use of prayers and meditation, reading, music, podcasts etc, and being in nature. Attendance at worship and small groups had decreased probably because of restrictions.

Feedback gained by the 2020 ACS suggests that worship services, both in person and on-line, experienced a decline in participation after March 2020. Hence it could be important for churches to notice the trends in music, nature, prayer, meditation and mindfulness as they shape their ministry activities to connect with their community.

Sources

<https://ncls.org.au/news/nature-is-most-preferred-spiritual-practice-of-Australians>

and *Spiritual practices valued by Australians in times of crisis*

The Uniting Church at work: Synod 22 – Proposal 8 – Synod Climate Action Plan

That the Synod of SA resolves to:

1. ACKNOWLEDGE that caring for God's creation should be a guiding principle through which all strategic priorities for the Uniting Church Synod of SA pass during the period 2021-2025 and beyond. This affirms a resolution of the annual meeting of the South Australian Synod in February 2021.
2. AFFIRM the National Climate Action Plan of the Uniting Church in Australia and adopt the SA Synod Climate Action Plan (Appendix I) with an aim to become a net zero emissions church by 2040.
3. REQUEST the Synod Standing Committee to establish a Synod Climate Action Working Group in consultation with the UAICC, the Environmental Action Group and relevant Synod bodies to facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring of the Synod Climate Action Plan over three years initially.
4. REQUEST Synod Resources Board to shift investments from unsustainable industries, such as fossil fuels and request the Ethical Investment Working Group to recommend options for further investment in renewable energy companies to the Resources Board.

Beyond the Garden Gate

Morialta Uniting Church

Wednesday 2nd November from 6.30 to 9.00pm

or join the online live stream. - watch the newsletter for information on how to register.

A forum to assist local churches to look at broader ways to engage in the health and well-being of God's creation, as local churches and as an ecumenical community working together.

Churches Together Justice and Peace, the UCA Environmental Action Group, Anglican Creation Care Network and Catholic Council for Integral Theology have drawn together a diverse panel of theologians & biblical scholars, ecology practitioners, farmers and youth leaders, so that together, we can listen and learn, and understand deeper ways of engaging as individuals and churches.

God calls us to care for all life.



Special Days

From Worship and Faith Education Team

October 1 International Day of Older Persons

The 2022 theme serves as a reminder of the significant role older women play in traversing global challenges and contributing to their solutions with resilience and fortitude. It



recognizes the vital contributions of older women and promotes the inclusion of their voices, perspectives and needs that are critical to creating meaningful policies to enhance a holistic response to local, national, and global challenges. The day is a call to action to embrace the voices of older women and showcase their resilience and contributions in society, while promoting policy dialogues to enhance the protection of older persons' human rights and recognize their contributions to sustainable development.

October 2 International Day of Non-Violence



This is observed on the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and it is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire

"to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence". The principle of non-violence rejects the use of physical violence in order to achieve social or political change. Often described as "the politics of ordinary people", this form of social struggle has been adopted by mass populations all over the world in campaigns for social justice.

October 16-22 Anti-Poverty Week

Poverty rates in Australia, the so-called lucky country, have barely shifted since 2002 and for children, they're increasing. More than 1 in 6 Australian children live in poverty. Our Federal



Parliamentarians need to pass legislation to halve child poverty by 2030 with measurable targets and actions to achieve this goal. All Australians are being asked to contact a member of Parliament or Senator and urge them to commit to halve child poverty by 2030. That is our international commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

November 1 All Saints' Day



This is also known as All Hallows' Day or the Feast of All Saints, a Christian solemnity celebrated in honour of all the saints of the church, whether they are known or unknown.

What's so offensive about Australia's public school chaplaincy program?

Adapted from an article by John Dickson posted on the ABC Religion and Ethics newsletter – June 2022

A healthy secular democracy does not exclude religion – not from schools and not from politics. It simply ensures that religious programs are never imposed, and always voluntary, just like the school chaplaincy program.

The history of the word 'secular' in political discourse makes plain that 'secular' does not refer to the "exclusion of religion" from public life, whether from politics, education, the media, or whatever. It refers to the spheres of life that are not controlled by religion. When a healthy secular democracy shifts from "freedom of religion" – where anyone can choose to believe or not believe – to "freedom from religion" – it is no longer either healthy or secular. This is secularism, an ideology that seeks to keep religion out of important aspects of the life of our community.

There can be little dispute that the central virtue of public education is "welcoming every child as equally important", which also aligns with Christian teachings. Even the most informed sceptics of our day have freely acknowledged that



it was, in fact, Jesus Christ and his universalising of the Jewish doctrine "that all are made in the image of God" that gave the West its prized doctrine of human equality. Noted atheist Luc Ferry, a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne and the former French Minister for Youth and Education, wrote in his book "A Brief History of Thought: A Philosophical Guide to Living", that "Christianity was to introduce the notion that humanity was fundamentally identical, that human beings were equal in dignity – an unprecedented idea at the time, and one to which our world owes its entire democratic inheritance".

It is painfully true that Christians (and the rest) have not lived up to their high ideals. But anyone can tell at a hundred paces that a hateful, prejudiced Christian is not following their Faith but defying it. The notion that Christianity "sneers at equality" does not seem much like an argument to me.

The full article was published as an open letter to Jane Caro - feminist social commentator, writer and lecturer based in Australia.

Correction

In the eulogy for Ralph Holmes published in September Vision I wrote that "Ralph and Dorothy were very much a part the Morialta family having been stalwarts of the Rostrevor congregation before our coming together." It should have read Newton and not Rostrevor.

Apologies for the error.

The Editor

