

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

December 2022

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

Welcome to our December edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

This edition brings you several reflections about the meaning of Christmas. One by Rev Bob on keeping it simple, one by Josh Way, a biblical scholar, who argues that two Christmas stories are better than one, one by author Herb Montgomery on why the Christmas story is for the marginalized, and one from our Chairperson, Bruce, on hope.

We celebrate our successful Christmas Market in words and pictures and December and Christmas also mean Christmas Bowl, a chance to help refugees and buy ethical gifts.

The next Vision will appear prior to the beginning of Lent, so if you plan a 'Lent Event' the cut-off date will be **27th January 2023**. 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.

A Christmas message from Rev Bob

Keeping Christmas simple, that's a hard thing to do. One thing I have learnt from experience over my life is that we often tend to over-complicate things and I reckon that's what we sometimes do over Christmas.

Christmas is ultimately a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus and to reflect on God's infinite love, which God pours into our lives in Jesus Christ.

This Christmas season we could reflect on three things to remember.

Keep it simple and uncomplicated, keep the Jesus story alive and fresh without spoiling it with complications.

The whole account of Jesus birth is set among simplicity. Jesus was born into some pretty simple and ordinary circumstances.

Jesus taught and lived by the example of love, to love God, love your neighbour and love yourself. We are called, particularly at Christmas, to reflect these same Christ-like attitudes in our life, and in our Christmas celebrations.

So, keep your Christmas celebrations simple, so you are free, willing, and able to serve those in need and celebrate with those you love.

Be there. Be there for others. What better gift is there than to be involved in someone's life. Christmas is traditionally a time

to give gifts in order to reflect our love. However, and probably more importantly, we also give love to people at Christmas, when we show up in their lives, serving and celebrating in the name of Jesus.

When you give someone your time, you're giving them a portion of your life that you'll never get back. You can always make more money, you can always buy more gifts, but you cannot make more time.

One of our aims at Christmas should be showing up and being present in the lives of those we love.

Give and share with delight. If we give gifts, and I'm not saying we shouldn't, then we ought to give not out of a sense of duty or a forced sense of obligation, but with a delightful, willing heart. Remember giving is a matter of willingness, not wealth. It's attitude, not amount.

The essence of Christmas is that we simply and humbly give of ourselves, just as God gave, generously to us, in Jesus Christ.

So, three things to remember - keep it simple and uncomplicated, make time to be there for others, and when we give, give with delight and love and with a humble and willing attitude that reflects the true gift of Christmas.

I wish you all a very happy, blessed, safe and festive Christmas. In the name of Jesus Christ, God with us, now and forever more, amen.

Batteries

Attributed to Rachel Dansby Freeman, used by Bob in worship recently

When a flashlight grows dim or quits working, do you just throw it away?
Of course not! You change the batteries.

When a person messes up or finds themselves in a dark place, do you cast them aside?
Of course not! You help them change their batteries.

Some need AA... Attention and Affection; some need AAA... Attention, Affection, and Acceptance; some need C... Compassion; some need D... Direction. And if they still don't seem to shine... simply sit with them quietly and share your light.



By the way, did you know that you can recycle your used household batteries via our church by putting them in the labelled box on the library table in the foyer? Alternatively, you can take them to Aldi, Foodland at Magill, Woolworths, Officeworks and many other places!

Christmas Worship at Morialta

Blue Christmas Monday 19 December at 7.30pm

Reflecting together on the hard times around Christmas

Christmas Eve Saturday 24 December at 7.00pm

Singing carols, storytelling, prayer and celebration

Christmas Day Sunday 25th December at 9.00am

Celebrating with song and word, the birth of Jesus

Everyone welcome!



A message from our chairperson, Bruce

Hope; it's a word that many of use often.

The different contexts in which we use the word give rise to multiple expectations. As we approach Advent and Christmas, Hope looms large in our liturgy and life together.

As members of a church that celebrates the Birth Narrative through the lens of the Resurrection Experience, we appreciate the hopefulness that Faith can offer. While as members of a society where minorities are marginalised and disregarded we may just as easily be drawn in by the apparent hopelessness of situations.

In talking about Hope I am drawn to one of our practices around Christmas. Anne and I watch a multitude of formulaic 'Christmas Movies'. Anne and I enjoy them for a number of reasons. Each movie follows a similar plot line that isn't too complicated and makes for easy and relaxed viewing. And probably most importantly, they generally leave us with a smile.

Starting with empty lives in one city or another, the protagonists usually discover community and meaning to life when their normal environment is changed. While not necessarily religious or spiritual, the movies generally celebrate the positive messages we are familiar with in many of the gospel stories of Jesus. In an imperfect world, while the message is somewhat saccharine, there is generally a sense of hopefulness throughout the developing story.

How much more Hope is available to us, as people of the way, as we reflect on the Good News of Jesus at Christmas? And yes, there is always Peace, Love and Joy as well!

Bruce

Prayer for a Busy Day

Lord, I feel so busy lately.

I pray you'll help me
remember what matters most
in the midst of all I have to do...

Give me eyes that see
the needs of those around me.

Give me ears that hear
the meaning behind the words.

Give me hands that reach out
to make a difference.

Give me a heart that beats
in tune with yours
rather than with

the clock on the wall.

Remind me often
that time is intended
to be given not spent.

And even in the midst
of all my *busyness*,
may I truly be about
your *business*.

Amen.

The Governor's garden reception

The Governor of South Australia, Frances Adamson, is patron of 135 organisations and she recently hosted a reception for volunteer representatives from those organisations.

Ray and Margaret Clogg, together with two other representatives from Guide Dogs SA/NT, were among those invited to the garden reception at Government House.



Margaret and Ray with the Governor Frances Adamson, and their friends from Guide Dogs SA/NT.



A Christmas story for the marginalised

Adapted from an article by Herb Montgomery on Patheos website December 2019

In Luke's version of the narratives about Jesus' birth, the author chooses an unlikely community to receive the first announcement of "good news to all people." This was the community of "shepherds living in the fields nearby."

In Luke's society, shepherding filled one of the lowest occupational roles and they were considered untrustworthy. Their work – according to some then-popular interpretations of Torah – made them continually unclean.

The most obvious implication is that the "good news" came first to a community on the edges of society, not those in positions of privilege and power.

Historically, Christians have spent countless hours defending certain details in Jesus' birth narratives, such as the virgin birth in Matthew's gospel, but ignored the more socially relevant implications of these stories. While the virgin birth story would have meant something to those living in Galilee who knew the Roman myths about the birth of Caesar Augustus, it says less to us today in our scientific age. Other elements of Jesus' birth narratives in both Matthew and Luke can offer much to a world of love and justice today.

How we as Christians hear, read and interpret the Christmas story matters! Jesus being born into poverty, being announced to the socially outcast, bypassing the political, economic, social and religious elite of the day. His parents becoming refugees and fleeing violence for the wellbeing of their child. There is an entire foundation here on which to build a framework for Christians who wish for a society based on equality and justice.

The story whispers to us of the need for communities to prioritize the poor, the insignificant, forgotten, and the marginalized. These are the people who gathered at this lowly manger and dared to believe that the babe who lay there, this good news, really belonged to them.

The message to the shepherds was, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people."

The babe in a manger would not affirm the dominant structure of a society of inequity, oppression, exploitation (See Luke 4:18-19). Instead, he would grow up to gather the outcast, the socially marginalized, those labelled and treated as less than the privileged and powerful. Early communities of Jesus-followers were almost wholly comprised of people from society's edges.

Was Luke's retelling of the Jesus story a desire to contrast Jesus' vision for a human community of no more oppression, exploitation, or marginalization with the much larger Roman society they lived in?

In this holiday season, during all that is taking place in the world, we must not forget what these stories say to those who are marginalized in our society. It is the marginalized who are centred. It is foreigners, shepherds, the poor, so-called "nobodies," and even the animals of a stable that gather around the manger to symbolize, I believe, the human community this newborn babe will grow up to speak about. The good news is for them.

The stories of Jesus are not stories of inclusion where the privileged maintain their positions of privilege. They are stories about a fundamental change in the way we shape our human communities. And it begins with recognizing the universal truths of the manger scene. The question for those at the centre is whether they will obstruct those working for a safer, just society, or work in harmony with them.

This is what these stories are saying to me this year. What are they saying to you? Wherever you are, keep choosing love, compassion, action and reparative, and distributive justice.

Another world is possible if we choose it.

Herb Montgomery is an author and the director of Renewed Heart Ministries in West Virginia. Renewal Ministries seeks to foster renewal in the Catholic Church by helping people grow in holiness and equipping them for ministry with the power of the Holy Spirit.



The origin of tinsel

The legend of the Christmas spider is an Eastern European folktale which explains the origin of tinsel on Christmas trees. It is most prevalent in Western Ukraine, where small ornaments in the shape of a spider are traditionally a part of the Christmas decorations.

The story goes... A poor but hardworking widow once lived in

a small hut with her children. One summer day, a pine cone fell on the earthen floor of the hut and took root. The widow's children cared for the tree, excited at the prospect of having a Christmas tree by winter. The tree grew, but when Christmas Eve arrived, they could not afford to decorate it. The children sadly went to bed and fell asleep.

Early the next morning, they woke up and saw the tree covered with cobwebs. When they opened the windows, the first rays of sunlight touched the webs and turned them into gold and silver. The widow and her children were overjoyed.

From then on, they never lived in poverty again.

Mighty Magill Market 2022

Notwithstanding the fundraising efforts of this year's market, by any measure it was a success.

Just before 9.00am there was the usual line of hopeful buyers ready to swoop on the many bargains available. The hall and church area looked cheerful and welcoming, mainly because of the smiling volunteers who waited to serve the market goers as they selected the items they wished to purchase.

We were fortunate to be able to offer a space for people to enjoy a cuppa and catch up as well.

There were plenty of smiling people, old and young, who voiced their appreciation for our market. Not many left empty handed, which is a measure of the value we offer.

Of course the market involves more than the 3 hours on Saturday, which was a positive reduction of hours from previous years. Thanks to all those who set up and displayed the goods for sale. There were around 50 volunteers who helped in some way to prepare and hold the market.

The financial return of over \$8,000 is a pleasing return for the effort put in, but the intangibles of community building and letting our neighbourhood know we are still here are also important.

Bruce

STALL TAKINGS FOR MIGHTY MAGILL MARKET

Cakes	921.00	Gourmet Goodies	700.00
Plants	830.00	Books	459.00
Bric-A-Brac	1990.00	Gift Boxes of Love	995.00
Gifts & Craft	993.00	Sausage Sizzle	280.00
Morning Tea	347.00	Raffle	287.00
Donations	150.00		

TOTAL ON THE DAY \$7,902

A mighty big thank you to Arlene L and Kath C for the great work done in counting and recording each stall's takings.

Carole
Treasurer



Fellowship News

The AGM for Fellowship was conducted at the November meeting with the following committee members elected: President - Margaret Clogg, Vice-President - Ruth Pitt, Secretary - Arlene Lomman, Treasurer - Arlene Lomman and Committee members - Kath Cheel, Margaret Whibley, Mandy Wood and Joan Wagner.

The speaker for the morning was Leonie Schiller, who gave an exceptionally interesting account of her decades of short-term fostering. Leonie has fostered 79 babies over the years, all of whom have arrived with a history of difficulties. After Leonie's love and care for weeks or months, the babies move on to the next phase of their lives in a very settled and secure condition.



The Christmas break-up lunch will be held at the Highlander Hotel, 647 North East Road, Gilles Plains on Thursday December 8th at 12noon. If you would like to attend, please contact Margaret Clogg as soon as possible.

Our program will recommence in February next year. Watch for details in the news sheet.

Special Days

From Worship and Faith Education Team



5th December

International Volunteers Day offers an opportunity for organizations and individual volunteers to promote volunteerism, encourage governments to support volunteer efforts and recognize volunteer contributions. It is a time to celebrate solidarity through volunteering. This is not an era to stand alone but together, as one, in solidarity with each other.

10th December

International Human Rights Day is observed every year on the day in 1948 that the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This document proclaims the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. In 2022, it focuses on "how rights are the beginning of peace within societies, and a way to create a fairer society for future generations".



December 18th

International Migrants Day was selected to mark the anniversary of the 1990 adoption by the UN of the International Convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families. People relocate as a result of the increased magnitude and frequency of disasters, economic challenges and extreme poverty or conflict. Approximately 281 million people were international migrants in 2020, representing 3.6% of the global population.

December 25th

Christmas Day has been observed for 1,686 years. While it is the commemoration of the nativity of Jesus, it is also a day for family celebration with gift-giving, family and social gatherings, symbolic decoration, and feasting.



December 26th

The Twelve Days of Christmas begins and continues until 6th January. However, in some western ecclesiastical traditions, 25th is considered the "First Day of Christmas" and it runs from 25th December to 5th January, with 6th January being a "thirteenth day". The "12 days from **Christmas to Epiphany**" was proclaimed as a sacred, festive season in 567 by the Council of Tours. Some suggest it was established in order to solve "administrative problems for the Roman Empire as it tried to coordinate the solar Julian calendar with the lunar calendars of its provinces in the east. In some countries, Epiphany marks the start of the Carnival season.



January 6th

Epiphany is a Christian holiday primarily commemorating the Magi's visit to the baby Jesus and the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Christians believe that the

12 days of Christmas mark the amount of time it took after the birth of Jesus for the magi, to travel to Bethlehem when they recognized him as the son of God. In Eastern traditions, it is called Theophany and focuses on Jesus' baptism.

January 22nd

Lunar New Year also known as **Chinese New Year** holds great historical significance and it is a festivity that brings the whole family together. Particularly celebrated in East Asia, Lunar



New Year presents a unique set of traditions dating back for centuries. Common traditions include decorating, reuniting with family, fireworks, red envelopes with money and gifts. Lots of festive activities take place where communities gather for dragon and lion dances and fireworks. Lunar New Year symbolises a time of unity where families reunite with each other. (2023 is the year of the rabbit).



January 23rd

Day of Mourning commemorates 'the Aboriginal Day of Mourning' – the Indigenous response to Australia's sesquicentenary in 1938. This was the first gathering of

Indigenous people protesting the prejudice and discrimination that was a daily part of their lives, and marked the beginning of the modern Aboriginal political movement. The 'Day of Mourning' became an annual event observed on the Sunday before Australia Day. Later it shifted to July and eventually evolved into NAIDOC week.

However, the observance of a Day of Mourning was endorsed by the 15th Assembly of the Uniting Church after a request from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). On the Sunday before Australia Day, all UC congregations are invited to hold worship services to reflect upon, and lament, the effect of the invasion and colonisation of this nation upon First Peoples.

January 26th

Australia Day/Survival Day

Australia Day is the official National Day of Australia. Observed annually, it marks the landing of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove in 1788.



The name **Survival Day** expresses the fact that Aboriginal culture is still strong and alive. But for other First Nations People there is little to celebrate, as it commemorates the loss of sovereign rights to their land, loss of family, loss of the right to practice their culture.

Why two Christmas stories are better than one

Adapted from an article by Josh Way
posted on the Patheos Website December 2015

As a Christian and a big fan of Jesus and hope, I still admire and embrace the season of Advent and the holy day of Christmas. There is much to love from ancient traditions and more recent memories. But what comes apart under scrutiny is the idea that the Bible presents us with a single complete and coherent narration of the birth of Jesus. Instead, it offers us two very different ones, and we have taken bits from both to construct a third hypothetical one.

By “harmonizing” the two gospel accounts of Jesus’ birth, we have muffled the unique and emphatic message of each.

This combined Christmas story is a pageant of familiar but detached scenes: Mary and the angel Gabriel, the journey to Bethlehem, Herod’s wrath, no room at the inn, a visit from shepherds, flight to Egypt and return, and the magi with their gifts. We may be aware that these elements are shuffled together from Matthew and Luke, as if each author was counting on the other to fill in his blanks.

We celebrate a miraculous birth, but the significance of that birth is relegated to cultural supremacy, religious certainty, and a vague “reason for the season.” The original stories have something very different at their heart and there is much to observe after considering the stories in contextual isolation.

Both are heavily reliant on established themes and narratives from the Hebrew scriptures, to an extent that is obscured when we attempt to harmonize them. Both are intensely subversive of those borrowed elements, suggesting an offensively radical inclusiveness in the case of Matthew, and a revolutionary inversion of socioeconomic classes in Luke. And, both are pervasively political, decrying the established order and envisioning a new world (for example see Mary’s “Magnificat” in Luke 1:46-55).

At the heart of both stories is the exact same announcement: the miraculous birth of the Messiah! But each has constructed its own story around that announcement, and done so with unique and bold creativity. These are not stories of cultural domination or religious supremacy, but of liberation, deliverance, and rescue for the marginalized and the needy – literally refugees and immigrants. These are the Christmas stories, ancient and relevant, joyous and true.

Josh Way is a writer, cartoonist, and web designer and has a Masters degree in Biblical Literature from Alliance Theological Seminary.



The Christmas Bowl 2022 – Give Hope!



From Act for Peace

Share God’s love with a refugee going hungry this Christmas.

Since 1949, compassionate Christians have followed Rev Frank Byatt’s legacy, coming together each Christmas across Australia and the world to provide safety in exile for people forced from their homes by conflict and disaster.

Along with churches across Australia, we can share God’s love through the Christmas Bowl.

This year is already shaping up to be one of the toughest in recent memory. With the cost of living rapidly increasing for many of us, both here at home and abroad, there is much uncertainty about the future.

The impacts of the climate crisis, rising inflation and the ongoing war in Ukraine are all contributing to growing food scarcity for many communities already uprooted by conflict and disaster around the world. This global food crisis is now pushing millions to the brink of famine with families in urgent need of food, care and lifesaving support.

In these difficult times, the Christmas Bowl not only expresses our unity in Christ, it provides a powerful way for Australian Christians to share hope through practical Christian action, led by our committed local partners working in the toughest conditions around the world.

Your gift through the Christmas Bowl will support local partners to meet urgent needs and help create a world where uprooted people have a safe place to belong. By supporting this important tradition, you are backing displaced people and helping to create, together, a world where uprooted people have a safe place to belong.

Visit the Christmas Bowl website to find out more.
<https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au/about>

Life...

Lyndon B Johnson said “Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose.”

Life - it comes for a limited time only.

It’s rationed to one per person and subject to change without notice.

It’s provided “as is” and without guarantees, but is non-transferable and the sole responsibility of the recipient.

Damage may occur through use or misuse. Any additional parts are sold separately, are costly and should be considered carefully before purchase. They may not improve the original, which is unique.

Mileage may vary and other undisclosed restrictions may apply.

It is a God-given gift. Whilst you have it, enjoy the privilege and talents it brings, be kind to others and have fun with this wonderful gift.

Jan Thornton

Australian Christmas songs ranked by how baffling they are to new arrivals

Adapted from an article by Patrick Lenton in the Guardian – Dec 2021



Anyone arriving in Australia will have moments of cultural discord, but nothing compares to hearing an Australian Christmas carol for the first time.

What is it about the national psyche that gives Australians the urge to remake Christmas carols that are hyperspecific to our nation? Maybe it is to do with climate dysphoria, because in contrast to the Australian Christmas experience of almost 40-degree temperatures, almost every Yuletide song mentions the snow, the fireplace, the warm eggnog and Santa dashing through the snow.

So to help visitors out, Lenton has rated Australian Christmas songs on how baffling they are to anyone from overseas, suddenly experiencing an Australian Christmas.

He regards “the 12 days of Christmas” as easy for people to understand: almost a parody of the original 12 Days of Christmas, with the various birds of the original (turtledoves, geese, French hens, etc) replaced with Australian birds (galahs, emus, kookaburras). Most people would quickly understand what is happening here, a bird-for-bird lyrical equivalence. But while the original carol is mostly about various birds for Christmas, some jewellery, then maids, pipers, ladies and lords-a-leaping, Australia doesn’t really have any of those things. So, the song sheepishly continues the native fauna motif ending with some numbats. Numbats are confusing for most people (half wombat, half emotionally repressed), but this could be solved by an informative book or an educational trip to the zoo.

The next entry, “Aussie Jingle Bells” takes the original beloved “Jingle Bells” carol and makes it “Aussie”. Instead of

snow, we have bush; and instead of a sleigh, a “rusty Holden ute”. The realities of what Christmas is like in Australia – hot (“beaut”) and featuring someone named Uncle Bruce – should be relatively clear to most foreigners, even if they don’t understand exactly what an “Uncle Bruce” type figure entails. They may even understand the clever game of replacement that this carol is playing.

“Carol of the birds” once again notes Australia’s wealth of interesting birds. However, unlike “The 12 days of Aussie Christmas”, we are given no inkling that this song is meant to be about birds unless you read the title. Instead, the listener is launched into a terrifying world of “brolgas” dancing, “lifting their feet like war horses prancing”. Most visitors have never heard of a brolga, and they sound terrifying.

The “Three Drovers” begins – “Across the plains one Christmas night / Three drovers riding blithe and gay.” Now this is an old Australian Christmas carol, credited to 1948, and upon close reading, we can discover that the drovers are meant to be a stand-in for some famous shepherds of biblical myth and are assumed to be recognisable as such. Of course, drovers are basically Australian shepherds but there is a lot of assumed knowledge in this carol.

Finally, Paul Kelly’s “How to make gravy” is not so much a carol, but apparently Australia’s most popular Christmas song – a classic festive tale of a criminal. The inmate is extremely concerned with the right way to make gravy on Christmas Day and is calling from inside a prison to deliver his recipe. Lenton does not know why this song resonates with the Australian public, but he ranks it as ‘the most baffling song to an outsider by far’. Does it imply that every Australian citizen has a deep parasocial relationship to correct gravy recipes? Or does it normalise the idea that most Aussies have spent time in prison or have loved ones in the clinker? At least the only bird in it is a jailbird, who is singing.

Advent Scripture Cake

Contributed by Julie Lomman

In Yorkshire, it was an old tradition to make this for what used to be known as Bible Sunday (the second Sunday in Advent). Today it can be a jolly good fruit cake for any occasion. Here are the details of ingredients:

- 4.5 cups of 1 Kings 4:22 (flour)
- 1 cup of Judges 5:25 (butter)
- 2 cups of Jeremiah 6:20 (sugar)
- 1 cup of Nahum 3:12 (figs)
- 2 cups of 1 Samuel 30:12 (raisins)
- 2 cups of Numbers 17:8 (almonds)
- 1.5 cups of Judges 4:19 (milk)
- 6 of Jeremiah 17:11 (eggs)
- 2 teaspoons of Amos 4:5 (baking powder)
- A pinch of Leviticus 2:13 (salt)
- 2 Chronicles 9 v9 (spices)

Like most fruit cakes, it will require a couple of hours or more in a slow oven.

Thank you!

Thanks to all who attended the working bee to tidy up the church and grounds ready for our market. The forecast threatened heavy rain but fortunately it held off until after the work was done! Windows were cleaned, weeds were pulled and morning tea was enjoyed by all the workers.



Visit to Korea – UCA PROK partnership

From Beverley Tredrea

It was my pleasure to travel to Korea in October to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the partnership of the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK) and the Uniting Church Synod of South Australia.

A group of nine from Adelaide travelled to Seoul and spent a few days in the capital of South Korea before travelling, by bullet train with three of the ministers from our partner Presbytery, to the city of Iksan.

The first morning we joined the Iksan Presbytery for their meeting which was celebrating the thirty years of partnership. Rev. Sue Ellis preached on “This is a new thing” and greetings were exchanged. For me it was an opportunity to meet with several ministers who had travelled to Adelaide in the past and three in particular who had stayed with me for home stays. It was a joyous occasion.

The next six days we enjoyed the hospitality of churches and members of the Iksan Mission Committee. Because of covid, home stays and the usual visits to see how the church cares

for the sick and elderly were not possible. We all attended the same church on Sunday, when greetings were again given and we were able to join the congregation for lunch in their restaurant.

Visits included Naejangeum National Park to see the stunning autumn colours, Saemangeum Embankment, a thirty year project to reclaim land and join several islands to the mainland, a ginseng farm, Namjeon Church, noted for its stand against the rule of the Japanese, Suncheon, a Martyr cemetery, Gwangju May 18th National cemetery, where those killed by martial law are buried and their story told so graphically, and finally to the DMZ on the border of North and South Korea. We also spent a night at the southern city of Yeosoo.

We look forward to hosting the Iksan PROK in June next year, when they visit to attend Synod and sign another MOU for the partnership to continue.

The partnership has been blessed and we rejoice in the fellowship, hospitality, learning and loving the same Christian faith and thank the God who watches over all we do in His name.

May you be blessed with the spirit of the season, which is peace, the gladness of the season, which is hope and the heart of the season, which is love. Irish Christmas blessing

A simple way to help a refugee

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)

One of the areas selected as a priority by MUC, during ‘Spring into Action’, was refugee support. One easy way for us to achieve that is to partner people seeking asylum with a lawyer from the ASRC.

ASRC lawyers will advocate for the asylum seeker’s protection and safety within the refugee legal system. Sadly, the system is designed to see people fail with its built-in hurdles which include:

- an average wait time of five years for a decision on an application for temporary protection;
- a complicated 36-page questionnaire only available in English;
- no guarantee of legal advice or support;
- a complex and hostile framework with strict deadlines and multiple chances to lose access to your rights.



Without a lawyer, it is unlikely that people will be granted permanent protection. ASRC’s Human Rights Law Program is made up of a team of 22 specialised lawyers who are the defenders of a fair go, truth, rule of law, and justice.

You can help today by donating to the ASRC to put a lawyer on their side and give people seeking asylum the best opportunity at protection. <https://asrc.org.au/>

Boost your impact with ethical gifts

Be Slavery Free (BSF) gives you the opportunity to fight modern slavery through supporting social enterprise businesses with ethically sourced products. This year BSF is joining with three partner organisations, *Offspring*, *For Dignity* and *Empower Collection*. Your purchase not only supports the work of these small, impactful organisations, but a percentage is invested back into the work of Be Slavery Free, and your friends and family will enjoy these fabulous gifts!



There are ‘Cushion Covers’ from *Offspring*, who believe in a world free from sex trafficking. All *Offspring* products are made by the women they serve in Kolkata, India. These cushion covers will bring colour and texture to your bedroom suite or lounge room and are available in a variety of patterns. 10% of every cushion cover sold will be donated to the work of BSF.

You can choose ‘Hug Mugs & Gift Sets’ from *Dignity* and give a donation to BSF. *Dignity* is a BSF member offering a selection of quality gifts and you can check out their entire catalogue at https://www.fordignity.com.au/?mc_cid=bef6c6be8c&mc_eid=07fbc1596e



Finally, why not give a ‘Be Slavery Free T-shirt’ from *Empower Collection*, so friends can share the message and walk the talk while wearing it. These shirts are made with cotton grown and milled in Africa, sewn in Kenya and decorated in Australia. 100% of every shirt sold goes to support the work of BSF. Check out the standard designs and the more edgy versions at <https://www.beslaveryfree.com/shop>