

# THE OLIVE BRANCH

February 2017 Brunswick Uniting Church Congregation Worship - 9:30 am

## > Meditation

### The Otago

During our recent trip to Hobart, we stayed in the suburb named after this scuttled ship, Otago. The ship in turn was named after the province of New Zealand where it was first commissioned. The Otago is famous for having been captained (briefly) by the writer Joseph Conrad. He wrote, "her hull, her rigging filled my eye with great content. I could see that she was a high class vessel, a harmonious creature in the lines of her fine body, in the proportioned tallness of her spars...one of those craft that in virtue of their design and complete finish will never look old."

Well she certainly looks old now! The ship ended its life as a coal hulk in Hobart before being scrapped in 1931 and left to decay on the banks of the Derwent River where its remains still lie.

Thinking of the gospel symbol of a boat as the community of Christ, the church, I offer the following meditation on this photo of The Otago.

I see decay, the end of power, beauty and fame, exposed ribs, wrecked bones, a cavity open to a heavy sky.

Broken, but present to the passing world.

Notable feet walked its decks – and forgotten feet too – a famous captain and an anonymous crew, a communion of sailors.

The rising tide will swallow, only to reveal again, for time has not yet taken it – resilient it lies in eroding currents.

Rough water breaking against its sides, calm water held within, reflecting light – a vision sanctuary in a stormy world.

Going nowhere? – or resting in the story of its glory, pointing to a future out of its past, opening ever more gradually until its broken vision becomes the world.

Ian Ferguson



## > Worship Calendar

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### SMP Blessing

During worship on **Sunday 5th February** we will commission the leaders and assistants of the Sunday Morning Program and bless the children who will participate. In particular the children moving from one age group to the next will be acknowledged.

This service is also an All Age Service during which we will celebrate Holy Communion.

### Student House Welcome

We will welcome new Student House residents, Andrew Crane, Stephanie Wilson, Giovanni Young and Peter Morley during worship on **Sunday 19th February** together with Bethany Davey who joined the program in October and bless all students participating in the program.

### Elders Commissioning

Kate Scull, Daniel Broadstock, Steph Gesling and Shawn Whelan will be commissioned as continuing elders during worship on **Sunday 26th February**.

### Ash Wednesday

On **Wednesday 1st March** we will gather for worship at 7:30pm to mark the beginning of the Season of Lent.

*Note* - Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of placing ashes on people's foreheads as a sign of mourning and repentance to God.

### Lent

On the first Sunday of Lent, **5th March**, we will celebrate Holy Communion as usual. What is not usual but very exciting is that we will be celebrating the baptisms of Mariel Datt, Shahzad Almasi & Mohsen Hashemnejad and their daughter Shaylin and confirmations of Alireza & Sahar Talebi.

Themes for the season of Lent which continues through until Palm Sunday, 9th April, will be discussed and developed by the worship committee early in February. Please let Saide Cameron know, ph. 0407 096 743, if you would like to be involved in planning for this series.

## > Index

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- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Meditation                          | 9. Endings & Beginnings, Pastoral Care News | 16. Reports: Worship                             |
| 2. Worship calendar, Culture of Safety | 10. CY&YA News                              | 17. Reports: Worship                             |
| 3. Advent Sculpture                    | 11. News, Happy Birthday                    | 18. Reports: Worship                             |
| 4. Blue Christmas                      | 12. Summer at ArtStop, JAM News             | 19. Reports: Worship                             |
| 5. A call through time                 | 13. Special Events, Communication News      | 20. Reports: Worship, Property                   |
| 6. A call through time                 | 14. Regular Events                          | 21. FUNdraising News, Preaching Plan, Lectionary |
| 7. Christmas Eve                       | 15. Reports: Council, Worship               | 22. Diary  |
| 8. Endings & Beginnings                |   |  |

## > Culture of Safety

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### Culture of Safety Contact Person

#### Keeping Children and Vulnerable Adults Safe

If any member of the congregation – child or adult - has concerns about the safety of our children, particularly in relation to child sexual abuse, or the welfare of vulnerable adults, it is important that you report this in confidence so that support may be provided. You may speak to Helen Rowe in confidence about your concern. Helen is the Safe Church Contact Person appointed by Church Council. Brunswick Uniting Church has a process for following up any concerns raised. The flow chart for reporting and responding is available here: [www.brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/resources/olivepresspdfs/20170125\\_child\\_abuse\\_reporting\\_flowchart.pdf](http://www.brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/resources/olivepresspdfs/20170125_child_abuse_reporting_flowchart.pdf). Please contact Helen in person or by telephone at 0423 009 813.

## > Advent Sculpture



In October 2016 we began an ambitious project in Sunday Morning Program: to create a living sculpture that would be an abstract representation of the advent story. I started by drawing a sketch, which told the story through simple shapes and helped us to think more symbolically about the elements of the advent story. We asked, what do we imagine when we think of the nativity, and where do these images come from? In an abstract form, the sculpture allowed us to explore different perspectives of advent, and weave our own stories into the larger story.

We made four sculptural elements for the project. The first was the Journey, which represented the journey that Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem from Nazareth in Luke's Gospel. It was made by the prep-grade 6 group from non-woven fabric with paperbark glued to represent footprints in the landscape.

The second element was the Village, which represented Bethlehem and villages everywhere, it also represented the place where Jesus was born. It was made by the YUCY crew out of rolled bark and paper covered wire, mounted on two stands.



The third element was the Gifts, which represented the three gifts given by the wise men in Matthew's Gospel. It represented our rejoicing at Christmas time and the symbolism of gift giving. They were made by the YUCY crew: the stands from willow sticks and wire, and the gifts from polystyrene balls with flowers and leaves pinned on to them.

The fourth element was the Cradle, which represented the place where Jesus lay when he was born. It was made by the prep-grade 6 group in the shape of a coolamon, with papier-mache over wire mesh, lined with paper bark.

The sculpture was made using elements from our own environment, such as bark, leaves and flowers, and the coolamon, allowing us to connect the advent story with our landscape and become part of the story ourselves.

I introduced a new element of the sculpture into the church each week of Advent. We integrated the advent candles with the sculpture and it was used as part of the service. For Advent 4 I also decorated the sculpture with flowers. The sculpture was also used as part of the Blue Christmas, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

It was great fun to work with the Sunday Morning Program to create the sculpture. I really enjoyed seeing how everyone engaged with it, both in the process of making, as well as in the worship services.

**Simone Alesich**

*On behalf of the whole congregation the worship committee offers thanks to you Simone for your inspiration and creativity with this project and to Julie for enabling the SMP to participate in the creation of these beautiful sculptures.*



## > Blue Christmas



The liturgy for the Blue Christmas Service, offered on **Wednesday 14th December**, responded to the Advent Sculpture. We lit candles at the journey place for Christmas hope, at the birthing place for Christmas peace, in the place of the gift for Christmas joy and in the cradling place for the embrace of love.



The Reflection, adapted from 'When the World was Dark' (Cloth for the Cradle) offered a series of questions to the Holy One - Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world, into the quietness of this city, into the dark corners and quiet places of our lives?, each time coupled with another question - Will you come ... and do something different ...?

Lighting the Christ Candle, Ian said

*We light this candle for the birth of our Saviour a reminder that in the darkness of life the light of Christ shines, showing us the way the way to live in hope to seek peace, to respond with joy and to rest in the unfathomable love of God.*



He then invited us to respond through actions: to place a stone on the road of the journey, to dip our hands in the water of the birthing place, to light a candle alongside the gifts and to place flowers in the cradling place.

We shared Holy Communion gathered around the table and among the sculpture.

You can read the full candle lighting liturgy and reflection <http://www.brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/resources/sermons/2016/2016.12.14%20Blue%20Christmas.pdf>

**Saide Cameron**



## > A call through time



Ian welcomes us and teaches us gestures for joy, love and peace



Richard reads Luke 2:1-7



Sarah & Chris follow the star



Maya reads Luke 2:8-14



The angels rediscover the joy of the Christmas message



Tess reads Luke 2:15-20



The shepherds realize that they really do love their sheep



Theo reads Mathew 2:1-12



The wise ones stop fighting and find peace together



A prayer for joy, love and peace for all the world

The 2016 Christmas Eve Pageant was a wonderful celebration of the story of the nativity. Told through the eyes of two children, Chris and Sarah, we travelled back in time where they encountered angels, shepherds with their sheep and wise ones who had all lost something precious. Together we learnt that we are called to makers of joy, love and peace.

The script 'A call through time' was a team effort, the result of a brain storming session, then written by Caitlin Mullen with input from Saide Cameron and the two YUCY groups. The beautiful dance sequence that welcomed in the Holy Family was choreographed by Beth Shelton. The young people had a wonderful time attending rehearsals with Caitlin and Rachel. We enjoyed two full day rehearsals which were lots of fun.

A fabulous crew directed by Saide made the whole thing possible. Many thanks to Wayne Matthews & his team for the wonderful adaptable stage pieces. Thanks as always to the Potter family for their creativity and determination to create a magical set to hold the story and to Helen Burnham for providing such fabulous props. Thanks to Julie Potter for gathering the musicians and Elaine Potter for her choir direction with the opening 'Star Carol' and finale 'Sing Noel & Go Tell it on the Mountain' medley and thanks to the choir members as well.

And finally thank you to the providers of our meal (Julie McKinnon, Ann Soo, Klaus & Sandra Schwingeler), Ken Morrison for his delightful photos, our Bible readers and to everyone else who contributed.

**Saide Cameron**

Welcoming the Holy Family



Jesus, Mary & Joseph! Who are all these people?



## > Christmas Eve

During the 11:30pm Christmas Eve service we heard the nativity of the Christ Child told through Bible readings, prayers and songs.



The Advent Scultures provided a focus for our candle lighting.



Ian lit the Christ Candle at midnight as the liturgy unfolded.

The Meditation written by Saide with input from Ian was offered in 4 voices. At the place of journeying we asked *'Where are you on the journey? Do you hear the call this night? Do you know your destination as Mary & Joseph do on their journey to Bethlehem? Do you hold in your hearts the hope and promise of being known and named, held in the heart of God?'* At the birthing place we heard the invitation *'Come and be this village, a place where people can come to be welcomed, to be known and named and loved'*. At the place of the gifts we prayed *'God make us your gifts to the world, tonight, tomorrow and every day, always'*. And finally at the cradle we heard the invitation

*'Hear him calling you to join him - reshaping the world with love, offering welcome, making peace. This is our call, to realise and offer our gifts at his manger, to be part of God's work bringing about the birth of the new creation'*. You can read the full meditation <http://www.brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/resources/sermons/2016/2016.12.24%20Christmas%20Eve%20Meditation.pdf>

We offered Prayers for the People remembering the projects we supported for the Christmas Bowl and celebrated Holy Communion by candlelight. Ian blessed us on our way to prepare for the celebrations of Christmas Day.



# Endings & Beginnings

## Thank you

During worship on **Sunday 18th December** we acknowledged and celebrated the ministries of Fiona Bottcher (Olive Way Co-ordinator) and Steph Gesling (Mission Planning Co-ordinator).

Fiona has been our Olive Way Co-ordinator since the beginning of 2016, a role that she relished, and is only setting aside to take up her studies to be a Minister (Deacon) within the Uniting Church. Steph has been our Mission Planning Co-ordinator since July.



Fiona began saying *'God is love and he gave us Jesus, love made flesh, so that we could see what love really looks like'*. She provided many examples of *'love made flesh'* - the welcome that she and Jack received which resulted in the 'best job I've ever had', all the people who have contributed to and shaped the Olive Way Ministry, the review and the resulting Steering Committee. She spoke of the privilege of the role, of the way that it had been both healing, transforming and deeply rewarding. She concluded *'Thank you with all my heart and God bless you'*.

Steph offered her thanks for the trust placed in her over the short but *'fruitful time of listening and discerning'*. She said that it had been a great privilege and a lot of fun exploring and engaging with people in our *'community of communities'*. She spoke of being challenged in the role both in terms of the change in outcome and the developing awareness of kingdom moments *'sparkling among us'*. She spoke of next steps and the Mission Planning report might become a touchstone for future developments in our mission and ministry.

Fiona presented Shawn Whelan (chair of Church Council) her favourite Olive Way cup as a symbol of hospitality and the donation box as a symbol of the generosity of the Olive Way. Steph presented a tree as a symbol of our community as a missional church and a bouncing ball as a symbol of the conversations that have begun and are to continue.



Shawn received the symbols and acknowledged their membership of and participation in the Ministry Team, formally dissolving this particular team and commending them all to God.

Ian offered our thanks and prayed a blessing on Fiona and Steph. We sang 'For you deep stillness in response' and Daniel Broadstock (Chair of the Congregation) presented each of them with a card of thanks.

**Saide Cameron**

## Reflections from an ex Olive Way Coordinator

When I was originally offered the role as Olive Way Coordinator, I all but shook my fist at the Heavens: *"God, what are You doing to me?!"*

I'd just finished a year of a Period Of Discernment, and out of it came a strong sense of a call to ordained ministry. So I'd notified the Presbytery Ministry Formation Committee of my intension to apply to be a candidate, a process that would take most of the year ahead, and was contemplating what my future ministry might look like - and then bam, I was offered *"the job of a lifetime"*.

A job I knew would be a perfect fit for me in so many ways; the hours worked around Jack's schooling, it was close to home, I'd be working in an awesome ministry team and, most importantly, I'd actually get paid to do a job I knew I loved! Also, this was the tough bit, I knew I'd commit myself to it as much as I could and want to be there in the years ahead, to see it change and grow. The thought of leaving after just one year was tough.



But as it turns out, and it seems oh so obvious in hindsight, my year of being Olive Way Coordinator has planted a seed for my future ministry as nothing else could, and in ways I could never have imagined.

I wrote an article about volunteering at Olive Way a few years back, and in it I said: *"it's so much more than a place to give and receive, it's a place to learn and grow. And you don't often get to choose the lessons, they're given to you like gifts."* Well, as OW Coordinator, the gifts just kept on coming. A year ago I had a habit of using the phrases: *"forced wisdom"*

and *"forced humility"*. Now, I can see them for what they really are; *"divine wisdom"* and *"divine humility"*, and they are precious gifts indeed.

But one of the biggest gifts of all has been to witness the coming together of people through the simple act of hospitality. At Olive Way people are greeted and fed, in body and spirit,

as they are. Their stories are heard and genuine relationships are born, friendships and communities grow, with all the beauty, joy and messiness of a shared humanity.

I love Olive Way and I'm thrilled with BUC's choice of Peter Blair as the new OW Coordinator. Beyond his extensive experience, he has already shown himself to be calm and compassionate,

and a person who embodies hospitality with genuine humility and kindness. With a wonderful team of volunteers, the tireless help and support of "the other Peter", and the BUC community backing him, I have no doubt that Olive Way will grow and thrive in the years ahead. No pressure Pete, really.

**Fiona Bottcher**



## Welcome

*"This is Peter, he's our new Olive Way Coordinator".*

These words have been said many times over the past couple of weeks, and almost every time the response has been one of welcome. Almost. One regular at Olive Way was not so happy, *"I just don't think it should be a man!"*

she said loudly. *"I really think it should be a woman in the role. I'm sorry, it's just what I think!"* I was, however, warned that this might be the response from this particular attendee. Thankfully it didn't take too long for her to come around to the idea. Later, turning to Fi she said, *"He really nice, but he's quiet!"* Well...that much is true.

So, perhaps a word of introduction for those of you who don't know me. I have spent the past 15 years working for Urban Neighbours of Hope in the South-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Urban Neighbours of Hope (or UNOH for short) exists to create communities of welcome and inclusion for people facing urban poverty and marginalisation. This included the running of a foodbank and drop-in, as well as hosting dinners and outings for people seeking asylum in the community. After 15 years of service my wife and I felt the need to do something completely different, concluding our ministry with UNOH in January of 2016.

Over the past year I have been completing a research essay at Stirling Theological College (where I also live with my wife Sharmila and my two children, Divya and Ashlyn) to finish my Master of Divinity. However, I felt the need to remain in relationship with those who are struggling in our communities. I had a growing conviction that theology and Biblical studies has to 'hit the road' at some point, it needs grounding in the real world. This is what led me to Olive Way, a desire to continue to serve and serve with, those who are vulnerable and marginalised.

It has been a lovely entry time into Olive Way, the welcome mat has been extended and the ground has been well prepared by Fi, Peter and the volunteers. Coming to Olive Way has felt like coming home. It is like the same characters that would show up to our drop-in in Noble Park turn up here in Olive Way, telling the same stories, experiencing the same hardships.

It seems that the struggles that the poor of Noble Park and Dandenong are the same as those of the poor of Brunswick. I am reminded of Jesus' words to his disciples, *"The poor will always be with you"* (Mk 14:7). I spent many years puzzling over this verse, which has often been used to excuse the neglect of the poor. But it was in walking in to Olive Way that it seems to have made so much more sense. The poor will always be with you, because you will always be with the poor. Brunswick Uniting has expressed this so beautifully in creating and nurturing the Olive Way space and ensuring that the poor and neglected are never far from us, but brought in to loving community.

**Peter Blair**

## > Pastoral Care News

### Compassion - Personal Prayer Ministry

The PC team offers a ministry of personal prayer through which members of the congregation, friends and family are prayed for on a daily basis until a request is made to be withdrawn. This is a personal and confidential act and we do not need to know why you have requested prayer if that is your wish. We believe that God knows the innermost workings of our hearts.

If you wish to be included and prayed for please just telephone or email Glenice Cook or Ian Ferguson. Each Friday the Prayer group will be emailed the names of those participating. If you know of someone who may need prayer please feel free to ask them if this would be helpful and forward their name to us.

If you would like to join this prayer ministry please contact Glenice, 0414 319 649.

**Glenice Cook**

### Gathering as Community

The Community Team of the Pastoral Care committee seeks to have a sense of oversight of all the different ways that we gather and to provide particular leadership for just a few. And of course we are always open to feedback about what's working and what's not and to help facilitate any new ideas that come along.

Coming up:

- 5th February - Cafe Style Morning Tea
- 26th February - Congregation Lunch (bring a plate to share)
- 5th March - Sydney Rd. Street Party
- 2nd April - Welcoming Ceremony & Lunch
- 14th April - Good Friday Hot Cross Buns & Soup

**Saide Cameron**

## > Children, Youth & Young Adult Ministry News

### YUCY

YUCY will be back in action soon with dates for term one: 10th February, 24th February, 10th March, 24th March

The first meeting for YUCY will be on **Friday 10th February**, 7:30 pm in the Youth Hall. Very excited to see everyone there! Contact Anika Jensen for more information, 0401 181 664.

### Volunteers needed for SMP ...

for simple practical tasks – minimal meeting/briefing time involved.

There is still a need for more volunteers to assist with small practical tasks like the pre-school bags that require regular re-replenishing (once every 2-3 weeks).

Every Sunday there is play equipment that can be accessed from the store-room for the children's after-church enjoyment and put away again at the end of morning tea.

None of these tasks require extensive briefing or meeting attendance.

Can you help? Please speak to Julie Perrin, 0409 019 987 or Anita Major, 0424 034 096.

### Student House

The student house has been quiet over the summer with some of our wonderful members moving out and others back home or off gallivanting for the summer break. During February we'll be welcoming Andrew Crane to the Green House to join Brianna, Sam, Beth and Emily, and Stephanie Wilson, Giovanni Young and Peter Morley to the Orange House, joining Tabitha and Meysam. It's a very exciting time for the Student House Community with some lovely fresh faces joining the crew! We'll be heading on our start of year retreat on **17-18 of February**, with the Student House Welcome service on **Sunday the 19th February**.

As published in the December Olive Branch, we're posting sections of the **Student House Review** month by month (it will be released in its entirety very soon also). Below is the first of the Major Themes: Reciprocity: Obligation vs Grace. These insights and reflections are the beginning of a continuing conversation about the way we as BUC and the Student House receive and spread the love of the divine at work in our community.

**Major themes** - In distilling the rich data and stories of the interviews and conversations about experiences of the Student House Community, we broke down the topics into five main themes which are explored below: Reciprocity, Relationship between Church and SHP, Dynamics of the Student House Community, Faith and Spiritual Development and the Role of the Committee. This is followed by a 'recommendations and further explorations' section.

#### Reciprocity: Obligation vs Grace

*"I'm not making it church as much during semester"* – Student

*"University clashed with Olive Way this year"* – Student

*"Oh you're a student house kid, that's why you are here....."*

*Wasn't a sense of choice."* – Student

*"Not seeing them as a work force... Each person is different and the congregation in general needs to be treated differently..."* – Support Worker

*"There should be a natural flow between the congregation and the SHP as a community and as individuals"* – Committee Member

*"[Support Worker] went through a difficult time. There were some comments, which may not have been helpful, directed to her...took her job seriously, professionally and with good humour. She told students when to step up but also experienced 'interference' from some church folk checking to see she was 'doing her job'"* – Ex-Committee Member

*"I don't think this is working, for both parties – I've heard disappointments voiced regarding the wavering energy of the students to their commitments, and in turn, student's discontentment with some expectations and roles. I've also witnessed how much work it takes to support these young people who need quite trusting and caring relationships as they develop. I'm not sure how to resolve this."* – Ex-Committee Member

The idea of obligations of the students is established through unclear perceptions of how the BUC community place the students within the greater congregation. This is the most unclear and contested issue for the students: feeling like they are welcomed in the congregation without any added preconceptions of how they should present. This was clear through many comments, that voiced that the students truly do want to be involved as much as possible, however are often busy during semester with assignments, university placement and other commitments such as part-time work and family.

It is also difficult to ascertain how much the financial reprieve of reduced rent implies for the greater congregation. There is sometimes an expectation that students will contribute to the community because it is perceived as a form of exchange. This is difficult, as it implies in some ways that the students wouldn't naturally be involved and also places expectations that would not be placed on other congregation members. It is important to note that the Support Worker's role is to ensure that the students are cultivating their own community while feeling able to engage with BUC, and they have to manage this work with the complaints and comments from BUC members who may not be privy to the complexities of student's lives, as seen in quotes above from ex-committee members.

Anika Jensen

## > News (of all sorts)

### Congratulations to

Courtney Rohde & James Balsillie on their engagement, announced during worship on **Sunday 27th November**.



### Singing on the Steps

We enjoyed singing Christmas Carols on the Steps to passers-by after worship on **Sunday 18th December**.



### Olive Way Christmas Party

The Olive Way Christmas Party on **Wednesday 21st December** was an absolutely wonderful celebration. Peter the amazing cook and his band of helpers served up 115 meals after Ian blessed the meal with prayer. Fiona Bottcher's ministry as the Olive Way Co-ordinator was acknowledged and celebrated. Carols were sung and a great time was had by everyone.



## > Happy Birthday

Hamish Batch, Sarah Collard, Karin Coverdale, Ross Coverdale, Oliver Cumming, Betty Elleman, Samuel Hall, Flynn Masterton, Jesse Kruse, Nick Kruse, Alfie Mielak, Helen Rowe, James Thom, George Tieman

### Stewart Lodge Carols

What a delightful event. People from all the Brunswick churches gathered to sing carols in a unique 'surround sound' choir arrangement with the residents of Stewart Lodge in the early evening on **Wednesday 21st December**.

After singing and supper Richard Arnold distributed the gift bags to the 75 residents. The response to the Gift Bag Appeal exceeded expectations (\$2,436.75) and the extra money (\$806.85) has been set aside for future projects with Stewart Lodge. Thank you to everyone who contributed.



### Carols at the Manse

A small gathering of dedicated carol singers enjoyed a pleasant evening of carols, stories and poetry hosted by Ian Ferguson at the Manse on **Thursday 22nd December**. We enjoyed a delicious supper and raised \$110 for the Christmas Bowl Appeal.



### Congratulations to

Sarah Curnow & Samuel Abdelsayed on their engagement, 31st December.



### Farewell to

David (Hossein) Kamali. David was confirmed as a member of Brunswick UC on 27th October 2013.



David has supported Ian with interpreting for the Persian Bible studies offered after worship. He moved to Geelong for study and work at the end of January. Although we missed offering a formal farewell to David he may come back to visit from time to time.

### Commissioning

Peter Blair is being commissioned during worship on **Sunday 29th January** as our Olive Way Co-ordinator. Photos and story next edition.

## > Summer at Artstop



The heat has not deterred our artists from continuing to meet and create some fascinating artwork in January. As Arts Access Victoria does not fund Artstop in the summer months, we have been most fortunate to have the support and generosity of professional artist Geoff Falk, collaborating with the group.

Geoff (a friend of Tim and Meredith Budge) works as an architect but also paints amazing landscapes often depicting strong indigenous themes and experiences of living in the outback.

His suggestion was for the artists to do something different – to paint a triptych together as a group!

This is a new initiative for the artists as they normally work on their own individual pieces. Geoff's idea draws on collaborative imagination/spontaneity and responding to each other's marks on the painting. We were presented with a challenge!

It was a delight to watch Geoff paint the first brush strokes of yellow on to the white canvases. He then invited us to respond and reassured us that it was a collective effort and there were no mistakes to be made. He also emphasised having fun and being more expressive with our strokes. Naturally,

the group were tentative but with encouragement, artists came forward and began adding their individuality and symbols to the work.

The triptych will be in progress over the next few weeks so please feel free to drop into Artstop on Wednesdays between 10am and 12pm and see our artists at work.

**Ann Soo and Leanne Salau**

PS - Thanks to Linda Wannan for the link to this fabulous article: 'How Hands-On Art can make a difference'. Dr. Tanja Beer, University of Melbourne explores how getting our hands dirty to help make art rather than just looking at it could spur people to get more active in tackling social problems. <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/how-hands-on-art-can-make-a-difference>

## > JAM News

The JAM committee always meets over a shared meal and January was no exception as we enjoyed a BBQ at the Cameron's on a delightful sunny Sunday afternoon.

We reviewed our Annual Report and hope you enjoy reading it along with all the other reports in the Olive Harvest.

We discussed the Mission Planning Report and in particular how our particular way of meeting and working might have something to offer to the whole church community in that we see what we do as being 'missional' - creating community and bringing people together. We take a very intentional facilitator role with respect to events and actions and rely on the congregation to 'make things happen'.



This year we want to offer a civil dialogue possibly on the topic of Sanctuary, continue to raise awareness about environmental issues (particularly plastic), support planning and preparation for the Sydney Rd. Street Party, inform and invite the congregation to rallies and actions (watch out for the Palm Sunday Rally, 9th April), organise a BUC Expo (23rd April & 7th May, tbc), participate in the Act for Peace Ration Challenge in June, and develop a calendar for the Tower Room Window displays.

We also want to take a more active supporting role with respect to Food Co-op, Olive Way, ArtStop, Love Makes a Way and FUNdraising.

Join us, we're a fun, productive & engaging committee!!

**Saide Cameron**

## > Communication News

### The Olive Harvest

The Olive Harvest is our fantastic collection of Annual Reports. It contains reports & stories that give full expression to our mission and ministry for the year. The collection will be published on **Sunday 12th February** in time for the AGM on **Sunday 26th February**. You will receive the Olive Harvest in the same format (email or printed) as you receive the Olive Branch (monthly newsletter). If you also want it in the alternate format please let me know [saide.cameron@bigpond.com](mailto:saide.cameron@bigpond.com) as soon as possible. A very BIG THANK YOU to everyone who contributed their reports in time or almost on time to enable the timely publication of the reports.

### Website Update

Shawn Whelan and Saide Cameron have devoted many hours in January to creating a new feel and look for our website. We now have a home page (welcome) concept and site map that responds to four key areas: Worship, Growing in Faith, Community and Social Action. We're quite excited about this new direction which we hope will provide a window into our community for 'church shoppers' whilst also sharing our story for anyone within and beyond the congregation who want to find out more about how we engage in God's ministry and mission. There will also be a members only section which we are yet to work on in detail.

The website will remain with the current host but will move to a Word Press platform and we are in the process of engaging an expert to assist with setting everything up and then providing workshops for people who will be involved in maintaining and contributing to the various pages on the website. The current plan is to have the new website launched by Easter (mid-April).



Saide Cameron

## > Special Events

### BUC Retreat

Everyone is welcome to join the Church Council at the BUC Leaders' Retreat on **10th & 11th February** at Ascot Vale Uniting Church. We will be reflecting together on the themes of the Mission Planning Report, and taking the next steps towards a documented set of goals and plans for the next few years. Please confirm you desire to attend with Shawn Whelan, Church Council chairperson, [info@shawnwhelan.com.au](mailto:info@shawnwhelan.com.au).

### Annual General Meeting & Lunch

The AGM will be held after worship on **Sunday 26th February**. At the meeting The Olive Harvest (collection of 2016 Annual Reports) will be formally presented to the congregation for adoption. We will also elect/appoint the Congregational Secretary & Chair for the following 12 months. A draft calendar for the year's activities will be provided including details of worship, community and FUNdraising events.

The Community Team will host lunch after the meeting and invite you to bring a plate of finger food to share. Tea & coffee and cool drinks provided. We hope this will be a great opportunity to catch up with people, especially people who are new to the congregation.

### Sydney Rd. Street Party



Save the date, **Sunday 5th March**, for the biggest party of the year (well in our area anyway). We open our doors to the whole community and join in the wonderful atmosphere shaped by amazing music, delicious food and just the most heartwarming sense of community that you could possibly hope to encounter. Last year Fiona Bottcher co-ordinated our participation under the theme 'Love no strings attached'. This year Fiona has provided us with another great theme '... because LOVE matters ...'. Some great ideas are brewing including performances by SROC of 'Love and food in Brunswick', an interactive presentation with Love Makes a Way and an exploration of how and why we 'love the earth' and how we respond to the threats of climate change. If you are captured by any of these great ideas please keep your ears open for ways to get involved. An initial meeting will be held on **Wednesday 1st February** and there will be lots more information coming from that meeting. If you have any questions please call Saide Cameron, 0407 096 743.

## > Regular Events

### Singing The Sacred Harp

The Sacred Harp Singing is a group of people who meet to sing from a book called "The Sacred Harp". This music is participatory, a cappella, loud, folk hymn singing, which originates from the USA. The book "The Sacred Harp" is a collection of shape note songs from various sources, from the 1770's to the present day. All singers of all abilities are welcome to come as often (or as infrequently) as they are able.

The style of music sounds something like a cross between Eastern European and Irish folk music. For more information on Sacred Harp music please visit [www.fasola.org](http://www.fasola.org)

Come along & join us on the **first Sunday** of every month, from 4pm-6pm in the hall. Contact Natalie Sims or Shawn Whelan, ph. 9495 6120, or email [sacred\\_harp@yahoo.com.au](mailto:sacred_harp@yahoo.com.au)

### Table Church

We gather to share a simple meal of soup & bread and dessert alternating on **Friday** (7-8:30pm) **and Sunday evenings**, (6-7:30pm), shaped by a liturgy that invites us to reflect on the week that has passed and to pray for each other. The shape of the evening is informal and low-stress.

Everyone is welcome and you can come every week/fortnight or just as you are available. If you are interested, or just want to know a little more, please contact Tim (0412 051 574) or Helen (0423 009 813).

### Mulling

*Mulling is our monthly catch up/discussion/mulled wine appreciation club for young adults 25-35.*

Talk to Sarah Curnow for more info, 0422 223 842.

### Meditation

There are four Meditation groups available

With Andrea: **Wednesday** at **9.30am** in the Youth Hall. Contact Andrea Alvis, 0413 950 619, for more information.

With Richard: **Wednesday** at **8am** or **5:30pm** at 29 MacFarland St.

On-line every **Monday night** at **9.30pm** to **10.00pm**  
Contact Richard Arnold, 0407 796 429, for more information.

### The Olive Way

Our congregation's outreach program is open on **Tuesday to Thursday** from 10 am - 1:30 pm. Community Kitchen, Dance & Art programs - Wednesday, Writing Workshop - Thursday.

New volunteers are always welcome.  
Contact Peter Blair, ph. 0431 193 810.

### Book Club at BUC

**7.30 – 9 pm, Wednesday 22nd February 2017**

Youth Hall, Brunswick UC

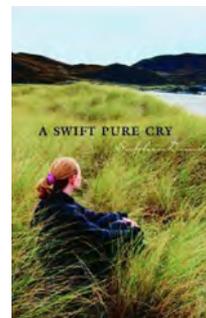
Two books have been chosen for our first meeting in 2017.

'A swift pure cry' by Siobhan Dowd, a novel about coming of age in poverty, the weight of societal views on small town life, and the pain and suffering of life after the death of a loved one. Based on a true story, the book follows one family's struggles through heartache to find peace and resolution.

'A monster calls', is a fantasy novel written by Patrick Ness from an original idea by Siobhan Dowd who suffered from terminal cancer herself and died before she could write the book. Set in present-day England, it features a boy who struggles to cope with the consequences of his mother's terminal cancer; he is repeatedly visited in the middle of the night by a monster who tells stories. Patrick Ness won the Carnegie Medal for this book.

Everyone welcome. Faye or Christine would be happy to talk to you about book club if you would like more information.

Faye 9379 1317 [faye.findlay18@gmail.com](mailto:faye.findlay18@gmail.com)  
or Christine 9386 8919 [christine@hornby.id.au](mailto:christine@hornby.id.au)



### Out and About Group

A monthly social group for older, active women and men. We visit places of interest or meet up for lunch or coffee. New members always welcome. February activity will be advertised in the Olive Press. Contact Helen for further information. Mobile 0423 009 813 or email [helen.rowe@rocketmail.com](mailto:helen.rowe@rocketmail.com)

### Brunswick Uniting Food Co-Op

Food Co-op Distribution Day

**Saturday 18 February** from 10am - 12 noon.

New members welcome! We aim to reduce our ecological footprint on the Earth by distributing food and cleaning products free of additional packaging. Bring your reusable glass, plastic, paper or cloth containers to purchase from a range of over 60 food and cleaning products. Reasonable prices. We meet in the Olive Way space. The Food Co-op is a ministry of BUC congregation.

Further information from Helen Rowe 0423 009 813  
or Meredith Budge 0403 717 714.

## > Reports

### Church Council

Dear Friends,

Regarding the month of January, I find that I have little to report.

During the first month of the year, Church Councillors have abandoned their posts en masse to pursue spirited summertime pastimes, such as hunting for the lost Ark of the Covenant, pearl diving off the coast of Havana, Etruscan folk dancing, and heckling Donald Trump rallies.

Nonetheless, before adjourning for the new year, Church Council took the following actions:

- We received the **Student House review**. Some months ago, Church Committee instigated a review into the culture and operation of the Student House program and its governing committee. The Student House is one of our longest-running mission programs, and it is appropriate to review these programs from time to time to monitor how they are progressing, and identify any arising issues or challenges.
- After a lengthy process of consultation with a range of past Student House residents and committee members, the review reported that the program has been a life-affirming and faith-building experience for many past participants. It confirmed the ongoing value of the program and made a number of recommendations for its future development.
- Among these, the most significant concern was addressing a perceived culture of obligation. The review found that a recurring theme amongst past Student House residents was that their welcome in the BUC community was inhibited by the impression that they were often being assessed for how well they were meeting their obligations in the Student House 'contract'. We do not believe that this was ever intentional, and we know how much love, care and kindness members of our congregation have given to Student House residents over the years.
- However, while there are conditions under which new residents are accepted into the program, we want the Student House, and its members' involvement in BUC, to be natural and positive, rather than driven by congregation expectations and perceived standards of involvement in the Church. Church Council hopes that we all bear this in mind as we continue to sustain this program in a renewed spirit of generosity and understanding. We are thankful for the way that our congregation has supported and upheld the program over the past years.
- We have employed a new **Olive Way coordinator**. Please take the time to welcome Peter Blair as he settles into his new role.
- Church Council set aside \$2000 to subsidise up to five young people from our congregation to attend **NCYC**.
- We have commissioned Matthew Cameron to undertake some maintenance and hand-over work of the **Church website** as he moves away from his past responsibilities at BUC.
- We continue to expand and consolidate our **Safe Church policies and procedures** to meet the standards expected by Synod, and State and Federal law.

On the 10th-11th of February Church Council is attending a BUC Leaders Retreat. This year we decided to open the traditional Church Council retreat to all BUC leaders and members interested in the leadership of the church. We will take some time to consider the Mission Planning Report in detail and wanted to open that process to any BUCers who wish to participate so that the Mission and Strategic Plans that emerge are as representative and transparent as possible, and incorporate as many ideas from as many brains as we can find. Hope to see you there!

Ever your servant, **Secretary Broadstock**

### Worship Committee

At our **December meeting** David Stephens invited us to reflect on Proverbs 15:13-15 and write about or draw something that has made us happy since our previous meeting. As is often the case this resulted in a range of interesting stories and experiences being shared.

We discussed our engagement with **children in worship** and noted inviting the children forward sooner and for longer, particularly with Advent candle lighting and the Christmas Bowl stories has been very positive.

We discussed the **pageant** and noted our gratitude to Wayne Matthews for his work in preparing the six pieces of stage that will be very useful for this pageant and other events into the future.

The **worship guidelines** for liturgists and leaders of children's time are in the process of being reviewed. We hope to have these ready for sharing in February.

We **reflected** on the activities and events of 2016 in preparation for the annual report and prepared a list of hopes and dreams for 2017.

We **farewelled Olivia Potter** after four years on the committee. Olivia commented that she has enjoyed being on the committee, learning about how the church works and how much is involved in making things happen. We in turn offered our appreciation of Olivia's creativity, insightfulness and wisdom. We are always ready to welcome new members, just let us know if you want to join.



**4/12 Advent 2 Isaiah 11:1-10, Matthew 3:1-12** Ian began by reminding the children of all the different things that we were doing during the Advent. Simone invited Daniel to tell us about the process for making the Village sculpture which involved weaving bark onto the structure. Simone commented that the abstract sculpture can represent many things including the place of Jesus birth. We continued singing Julie Perrin's song Flame of Love with the lighting of the Advent candles. The children continued making their own Christmas Bowls as one of the options during the All Age activities in the Gathering Sapce

For the second Sunday of Advent Ian engaged us in a reflection on 'metanoia' commenting that *it is a big thing in the church ... a Greek word that literally means 'a change of mind'*. Ian explored what this meant for the Ancient Greeks, the importance of metanoia in the Gospel of Matthew and John the Baptist and Jesus' call for us to *repent, repent, change our hearts, change our minds*. He shared an excerpt from the Westminster Confession, commenting that *it is an unattractive view and yet I see the need for metanoia in my life and in the world* and spoke of the Hebrew prophets call to repentance, *to return, to turn back to God with all your heart, your whole heart ...*

Lightening the mood then, Ian shared a portion of a call to repentance put into the mouth of Paul Ryan ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGdvyT\\_U4Fk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGdvyT_U4Fk)), ultimate conservative establishment Republican powerbroker, speak of the House of Representatives in which role he sets the Republican political agenda, (in 2016) the policy was called 'A Better Way'. Ian commented that Paul Ryan is using the language of the ancient prophets – come back to me. He said that he is motivated towards transformation by the language used in this clip, by the call to return to God who is *gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love*.

Returning to John the Baptist and Jesus he said *'John proclaims judgement but Jesus heals, forgives, teachers, he forges family among those excluded. He resists evil, shows compassion, he gives life. He loves in other words and what better way is there than that?'* Finally he drew our attention again to the Westminster Confession and the beauty of the word mercy which can also be found there among the ugliness. He concluded *'To apprehend that mercy, to feel that love, to hear God singing come on back to me, come on back to me is the turning point of repentance, a better way to a better world.'*



**11/12 Advent 3 Isaiah 35:1-10, Matthew 11:2-11** Simone and Charlie shared the process of making the beautiful and delicate sculptures representing the gifts of the Magi, offered to Jesus at his birth. Ian taught us all AUSLAN signs (courtesy of Jane Allardice) to help us in singing Flame of Love after the children had lit the three Advent candles for the first three weeks of Advent. The Christmas Bowl was rung, as it has been each week in preparation for hearing this week's Christmas Bowl story. Ian prayed and gave thanks for the work of Act for Peace through the Christmas Bowl appeal.



'Truly I tell you, says Jesus, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist but the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than him' quoted Ian to begin his sermon. He went on to tell us that the Oxford Dictionary word of the year for 2016 is 'post-truth'. Exploring what this means for those of us living in the post truth era he shared some insights about truthiness and trumpiness, courtesy of satirist Peter Colbert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqQTxl3Bsbw>

Returning to John the Baptist in his role as a prophet Ian wondered 'Is God a legitimate source of truth ....?', asking where is the evidence 2000 years on for John's prophecy. He offered us stories about how we engage with and understand truth through an advertisement in Crosslight for a book 'A Defence of the Bible', John's expectations of the coming Messiah and Jesus' response to his question 'Are you the one?' and finally the story told through the Sydney Daily Telegraph of the rebranding of the social services arm of the Uniting Church.

Concluding Ian said 'And so finally to the truth of the day ...., commenting on Jesus claim about John the Baptist, *It doesn't even feel true Jesus. You're just redefining greatness. You can't do that. You're seeing the world in a completely different way to what it actually is. You're changing the truth. Yes he is. He's giving us a new truth, a truth to live by, a truth to hope in, a truth that makes all things new. Truly I tell you. Amen.*

**14/12 Isaiah 9:2,6-7, Luke 2:1-14** The **Blue Christmas** service was held on a Wednesday, **14th December**, instead of Sunday in the hope that more people were able to attend. The worship committee was very pleased that three times as many people did in fact come along. See page 4 for pictures and a full story.



**18/12 Advent 4 Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 12:18-25** Ian reminded us that each week we have been adding one part of the Christmas story to the sculpture. This week Simone placed the cradle which is shaped like an aboriginal coolamon and which they had made using the papier mache process before painting it. She commented that all of the different parts of the sculpture had been made with natural materials to help us connect with the story. The children then lit the candles as Ian reminded us of the meaning of each part of the sculpture. He said that the cradling place reminds us of the humble place in which Jesus was born.



'What gets in the way of Christmas? ... What are the obstacles to Christmas?' Ian asked to begin his sermon on the final Sunday of Advent. Ian said that he was going to 'tell us a Christmas story by which I mean a story about the way God's reign of love is born on earth even through the obstacles put in its way.' Weaving the story of 'Mary' a member of one his previous congregations through the story he said 'I've chosen to tell it because today we're invited to reflect on Matthew's version of the Christmas story' in which the key obstacle to the Christmas miracle is Joseph's righteousness, 'his allegiance to his moral traditions'. He commented on the morally confusing times that we live in and that the Joseph dilemma is that 'one of these obstacles (to God's saving way in the world) might be our moral uprightness, our perception of what is right and good'. Mary's story of her son's revelation that he was gay and dying of AIDS, his subsequent horrible death and Mary's

quiet transformation into a radiant messenger of love and welcome to all was full of heartbreak and hope, her fears of rejection by her home congregation finally overcome through counselling offered by a supply minister. Ian concluded 'Mary was not rejected and shamed but loved, supported, shown great compassion, even by those who, like Joseph, had their moral foundations shaken by her story. And it became an annual event that continued through my time at that church. Each year during Advent on the Sunday closest to World AIDS Day Mary would lead us in prayer and there was never a dry eye in the house. We build the obstacles, often with good intentions but the Holy Love of the Divine will not be stopped, not even death will be an obstacle to its coming. In the name of Christ, born through struggle, crucified and risen. Amen.'

The **Christmas Eve Pageant** was a wonderful celebration of the story of Christ's Nativity. See the story 'A call through time' on pages 5&6.

**Christmas Eve 11:30pm Isaiah 9:2-7, Luke 2:1-21, John 1:1-14** Our late night celebration of the birth of Christ including lighting the Advent candles together with songs, prayers, meditation and Holy Communion. See page 5 for the story and pictures.

**Christmas Day Hebrews 1:1-12, John 1:1-14, Luke 2:1-14** Ian invited the children to dress up in the costumes from the pageant to help tell the story of Jesus' birth. The Advent candles & Christ Candle were lit.

On Christmas Day Ian told us *'this week I counted up the number of times each character or thing is mentioned in Luke's version of the Christmas story'*. After sharing the all important statistics he revealed that the word 'census' was on a par with the shepherds, angels and Bethlehem with four mentions. Reminding us of our 2016 census experience Ian then shared the historical anomalies related to Luke's use of the census in the Christmas story and said therefore that *'we can only focus on the narrative, symbolic and theological function in the story ...'* and commented in detail on each of these functions. Prompted by an innocent question from Felix the previous Sunday Ian reflected and asked us *'Where is your place at Christmas time? Is it the same as the place you were born?'* He went on to speak of Shaylin and her family who had played the part of the Holy Family in the pageant sharing with us that *'their application for a visa to stay in Australia, therefore their refugee status had been rejected. ... saying to Shaylin's parents return to the place of your birth but they can't, that's not their place any more either. They are people of no place and last night they sat here at the manger, the place of no place, Shaylin embodying more poignantly than we expected the one for whom like her there is no place in the schemes of power.'* Commenting on the church's great sacrament, baptism, Ian concluded *And when the powers of the world try to put us in our place as they do we say we are a people of the manger and the Good News of our peace lies there. In the name of the new born Christ for whom there was no place. Amen*



**1/1 Christmas 1 Matthew 2:13-23, Ecclesiastes 3:1-15** Ian invited the children to help light the Advent & Christ candles as we prayed to God for the new year using the different parts of the story concluding lighting the Christ Candles for Jesus, God's greatest gift to the world. If you would like to listen to this beautiful prayer please email [saide.cameron@bigpond.com](mailto:saide.cameron@bigpond.com)

Ian played a few lines from Pete Seeger's song 'Turn, turn, turn' to begin his reflections arising from the book of Ecclesiastes. He commented that it is a very negative book with a *pessimistic view of life* and shared Beth's analysis of the writer's mental health. Ian said that her analysis suggests that *'there might be something hopeful for us to glean from this diary of a depressive after all'* although as a spoiler alert he did tell us that the book ends as it begins *'Vanity of vanities ... all is vanity.'* He said *'There is vanity, futility, absurdity as we look out into this new year. Is that what you see? ... How will you cope in the face of life's challenges this year? What will keep you from falling into the kind of despair experienced in Ecclesiastes?'* Ian commented that Beth's analysis suggests that the mindful approach to suffering taken by the writer of Ecclesiastes has something to offer and asked us if we are prepared to give everything its time going forward into 2017. He shared the twist in the book – that the writer acknowledges God's gift of joy, *the enjoyment of simple things amidst the contradictions of life, its times of weeping and losing and asked, Could you find joy amidst struggle in good food, good company, hard work and would that help your living?.* Concluding he asked *'What light does this all shed on the path we would follow Jesus into 2017?'* He reminded us of the gospel story of Jesus' birth and the suffering it wrought, of his seemingly futile death, of the suffering that preceded and followed it, of the scars he still bares *amidst the contradictions of life in our world. And yet we pause, we pause at this time in joy to celebrate his birth and all that will flow from it. Brothers and sisters may you know the blessing of joy in 2017, God's gift in our hearts, Christ's presence in our lives. Amen.*



**8/1 Baptism of Jesus Isaiah 42:1-9, Matthew 3:13-17** Saide spoke with the children about the baptism of Jesus, reminding them of the relationship between John and Jesus and speaking of Jesus being beloved by God and the ways in which he was powerful. She reminded everyone that we are all beloved by God and called to work for justice and peace, making the world a place where everyone knows that they are loved by God, just like Jesus did in his ministry.



We welcomed Graeme Garrett, member of our congregation, as our preacher. Taking the title of his sermon as 'A Tale of Two Inaugurations' Graeme began by reminding us that 'In 12 days' time, on Friday, January 20th, Donald Trump will take the oath of office and be inaugurated as the 45th President of the USA.' Reflecting on this and Hilary Clinton's concession he said that there was something missing 'A call to vigilance, action, resistance' in response to the claims

and promises made by the incoming president. He then turned our attention to another much older inauguration - the baptism of Jesus and reminded us of what Jesus stood for as prophesied by Isaiah, a commitment to justice and truth. He said 'The contrast between these two inaugurations could hardly be in sharper. Does that contrast matter to us as Christians? What should we do with it?. Commenting on John's incredulity when asked by Jesus for baptism he said that Isaiah's words *matter now more than ever. We need to hold them firm to our hearts. To proclaim them without growing faint. To enact them in our world without being crushed. It all looked pretty unlikely to John in a Pilate-shaped world. And it looks pretty unlikely to me in a Trump-shaped world. With John I feel the urge to say 'I'm out of here.'*



### 15/1 Epiphany 2 Isaiah 49:1-7, John 1:29-42

Julie spoke with the children about meeting new people and what it's like to look at people and to be seen. She commented on all the watching and seeing going on in the story of John and Jesus in the gospel, spoke of the movie Avatar in which the Na'vis people say 'I see you' and finally of friends

and people who experience life differently. She said that we can all remember Jesus' invitation to 'Come and see, come and play' when we meet and welcome new people.



We welcomed Andy Calder who is both a member of our congregation and a UC Deacon responsible for oversight of Disability Inclusion for the VicTas Synod. Andy began by speaking of *Jesus calling disciples to his way of life and mission in the world ... a mission which challenged the sins of the world which create impoverishment, exclusion and exploitation of people who are easily overlooked and forgotten.*

Referencing Graeme's sermon he shared Meryl Streep's [Golden Globes Cinema Awards speech](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-03-4:42)

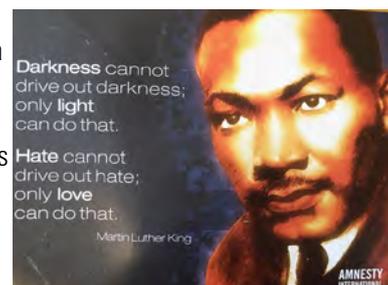
(3:03-4:42) in which she spoke powerfully about the incoming president's unacceptable disrespect towards a reporter with cerebral palsy. Commenting on this snippet of her speech he said 'It seems to me that Meryl Streep has a pretty good grasp of the Christian manifesto of service and Jesus' call to mission.' Andy told us that this manifesto has inspired the development over the past 20-30 years in the field of disability theology for which the central question is 'how should we think of and respond to people whom we experience as "other" than "us"'. He detailed three innovative images of God: The Accessible God, The Interdependent God and The Disabled God, telling us that *these three images informs the ministry and missional response of the Synod regarding people marginalised by disability:* Hi work includes implementation of the 2015-2018 Disability Action Plan (see plan and videos here: <https://www.victas.uca.org.au/communityservices/Pages/Disability-Inclusion.aspx> and work with all faith communities in Victoria which has resulted in the release by the Faith Communities Council of Victoria of a one-page document called 'Statement concerning people with a disability' [http://faithvictoria.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_acymailing&ctrl=archive&ask=view&mailid=586&key=patOFNJP&subid=630-X2DzQMhxDwdFbX&tmpl=component](http://faithvictoria.org.au/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=archive&ask=view&mailid=586&key=patOFNJP&subid=630-X2DzQMhxDwdFbX&tmpl=component). Andy concluded his sermon *We give thanks for the call of Jesus, the Anointed One, to be his disciples at mission, walking in the shoes of the outsider; to both seek out and welcome those who are marginalised and perceived as different. And to be people who are stirred by a vision of hope, compassion and justice, both within our defined communities of faith, and more widely in the world. Amen*

**22/1 Epiphany 3 Isaiah 9:1-4, Matthew 4:12-23** Natalie spoke with children about Jesus' ministry and two very important words in the story. The first was 'repent' which she said kind of means being sorry but more than that it means changing what we're doing and doing things differently.



She showed a postcard of Martin Luther King who she said was a really good example of someone who called the world to repent. The second word/phrase was 'follow me' and she spoke about how difficult it might have been for the disciples to leave their jobs and follow Jesus. She said that sometimes it's difficult for us to work out what we need to do when Jesus calls us to follow him

just like it was for the disciples and for Martin Luther King.





We welcomed Sunny Chen, University of Melbourne Chaplain and lecturer in New Testament Greek at the CTM, as our preacher. Sunny began by sharing a story about his OTT OCD in relation to hygiene and baby wipes. He then turned our attention to the gospel and in particular the phrase 'sitting in darkness'. Explaining the process of translation of the scriptures he said that Matthew had made a mistake in using this phrase and wondered why. To help explore this question he told us a story of becoming separated from his mother in Central, Hong Kong, as a child and the moment of grace his mother experienced when she found him much later sitting on the side of the road with a homeless man holding a bread roll. He commented 'Who would expect a homeless person to be the God's grace and kindness?' Sunny helped us to explore Matthew's use of the word sit through the gospel in reference to himself as a tax collector, of the blind men sitting by the road, of the two Mary's sitting outside the tomb - all examples of hopelessness and desperation and of the moments of grace they experienced. He commented that God's grace may come to us unexpectedly and shared a story from Friday's 'horrific incident in the CDB' in which a homeless man was seen providing comfort to one of the victims. He concluded by sharing another story in which he found himself as a young arrogant man, despite being a 'hygiene freak', sitting by the side of the road talking with a homeless man for a long time. He said that he remembers concluding the conversation by whispering into the man's ear 'God loves you'. He commented that he wasn't sure in this instance whether he was the vessel of God's grace or the other way around. He concluded 'Sometimes in our lives, in our desperation, in our hopelessness, God's grace may appear in such a totally unexpected way. The people sitting in darkness have seen a great light. Amen.'

Saide Cameron

## Property Committee

*The following activities have been undertaken/completed over the past month:*

- Stain glass window (in the food co-op area) has been repaired.
- Manse cracks filled (replastered) and painted.
- Ian and Shawn have negotiated with the BIUC and ASWC in relation to the sharing the costs associated with the professional cleaning of the kitchen ovens. They have both agreed to share the costs. Jenny will monitor the cleanliness of the ovens and organise as required.

*The following activities are being attended to over the coming months:*

- Assess rising damp damage at a number of locations, including at the apse inside the church.
- Finalise the church roof project; synod report, slate tiles.
- Determine action to be taken in relation to the church spire. Awaiting a quote to paint the spire.
- Obtained a quote to have the faulty down light dimmer replaced as required. The work is not urgent and is to be scheduled as a planned item in 2017. Operational dimmer is currently set up to operate both sets of lights.
- Remeasure the moisture in the soil under the church.
- Continuing Investigating childproof locking arrangements for the gates on the youth hall front yard. Self-closing arrangements can't be installed; "Please Close the Gate" signs have being obtained, to be installed.
- Finalise the insurance claim associated with the break-in. Awaiting the repairs to the damaged church furniture.

- Update the cleaning contractor arrangements with Fresh Start Asset Services, Lentara's cleaning social enterprise business. Contract effective commencement date has been agreed as 1st Feb '17. Jenny to sign and to provide the Lentara for their signing.
- David Stephen and Nick Burnham have developed a proposal for the lighting arrangements for the tower room to complement the displays. The proposal has been approved by church council.
- Repair the heater on the south wall in the west end of the hall. Initially the gas is ignited, however it won't maintain the gas flow.
- Investigate cigarette bins for the front of the church near the indigenous recognition sculpture garden.
- The shed in front of the youth hall will be replaced with a new shed on a concrete slab to house the rostra's (stage platforms utilised for the pageant) that Wayne Matthew (and others) has built.
- A community garden is to commence on the church's property.
- Olive Way automatic door to be repaired.
- Hall kitchen oven to be repaired, a number of faulty components exist, including the display.
- Down lights in the church to be replaced.
- Synod Annual Child Safety Check to be assessed and actions taken to conform.

Ray Cameron

## > FUNdraising News

### Christmas Bowl

The response to the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal was amazing and heartwarming. Over \$10,000 was donated to the appeal from our congregation through FUNdraising (\$2,110.80) and the rest through personal donations.

Thank you to everyone who supported the stalls on Sundays 4th & 11th December. Your enthusiastic purchases made everyone's work so worthwhile. Thank you to Ann Soo, Natalie Papworth and Leanne Salau for your creativity and love making beautiful things to look at, touch and eat.

Thank you to everyone for your support of our FUNdraising efforts and events throughout 2016. It's been quite an amazing year. We hope you make the time to read the Annual report for all the details of what we did and what was raised and for who.

### Planning for 2017

We met in January to plot and plan for the coming year. We have some new and some tried and trusted ideas to raise money for the Olive Way, Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre, UCA Appeals and Act for Peace Appeals.

We'll be offering a short presentation at the Annual General Meeting and handing out a postcard so that you can 'save all the dates' and be as involved as you can. We aim for all of the events to also provide fun and engaging ways for us to gather as community. Please join us!

Saide Cameron and Glenice Cook

## > Preaching Plan

February 5	Ian Ferguson <b>Epiphany 5, Holy Communion</b>	March 1	Ian Ferguson, <b>7:30 pm</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b>	March 26	Ian Ferguson <b>Lent 4</b>
February 12	Ian Ferguson <b>Epiphany 6</b>	March 5	Ian Ferguson <b>Lent 1, Holy Communion</b>	April 2	Ian Ferguson <b>Lent 5</b>
February 19	Ian Ferguson <b>Epiphany 7</b>	March 12	Ian Ferguson <b>Lent 2</b>	April 9	Ian Ferguson <b>Palm Sunday</b>
February 26	Ian Ferguson <b>Transfiguration</b>	March 19	tbc <b>Lent 3</b>	April 13	Ian Ferguson, <b>7:30 pm</b> <b>Maundy Thursday</b>

## > Lectionary

### After Epiphany

A period in which the Church reflects on the manifestation of Christ to all people. The Baptism of the Lord is the first Sunday of this period. On the last Sunday, we hear the readings of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The length of this period varies depending on the date of Easter.

Date	Day	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel	C
5/2	Epiphany 5	Is 58:1-9a (9b-12)	Ps 112:1-9(10)	1 Cor 2:1-12(13-16)	Mt 5:13-20	G
12/2	Epiphany 6	Duet 30:15-20	Ps 119:1-8	1 Cor 3:1-9	Mt 5:21-37	G
19/2	Epiphany 7	Lev 19:1-2, 9-18	Ps 119:33-40	1 Cor 3:10-11, 16-23	Mt 5:38-48	G
26/2	Transfiguration	Ex 24:12-18	Ps 2 or 99	2 Pt 1:16-21	Mt 17:1-9	G

### Lent

A season of preparation and discipline that begins with Ash Wednesday and concludes at sundown on Holy Saturday. During the forty weekdays and six Sundays in Lent, the Church remembers the life and ministry of Jesus and renews its commitment to him in Christian discipleship.

Date	Day	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel	C
1/3	Ash Wednesday	Jl 2:1-2, 12-17 or Is 58:1-12	Ps 51:1-7	2 Cor 5:20b-6:10	Mt 6:1-6,16-21	P
5/3	Lent 1	Gn 2:15-17, 3:1-7	Ps 32	Rom 5:12-19	Mt 4:1-11	P
12/3	Lent 2	Gn 12:1-4a	Ps 121	Rom 4:1-5, 13-17	Jn 3:1-17	P
19/3	Lent 3	Ex 17:1-7	Ps 95	Rom 5:1-11	Jn 4:5-41	P
25/3	Annunciation	Is 7:10-14	Ps 45 or 40:5-10	Heb 10:4-10	Lk 1:26-38	W
26/3	Lent 4	1 Sm 16:1-13	Ps 23	Eph 5:8-14	Jn 9:1-41	P

## February 2017 Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>January 29</b> 9:30 – Ian Ferguson <b>HC</b> OW Co-ordinator Comm'g ** - Community Team M'g  4:00 – Sacred Harp 5:00 – Indonesian W'p	30	31	<b>February 1</b> 10:00 – Olive Way 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner 1:30 – Sydney Rd. Street Party planning	2	3	4
9:30 – Ian Ferguson <b>AA HC</b> Sunday Morning Program Blessing  5:00 – Indonesian W'p	6	7	8:00 – Meditation 9:30 – Meditation 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner  5:30 – Meditation	8	9	10
9:30 – Ian Ferguson  5:00 – Indonesian W'p 6:30 – Table Church	13	14	8:00 – Meditation 9:30 – Meditation 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner  5:30 – Meditation 7:30 – Worship C'tee	16	17	18
9:30 – Ian Ferguson Student House Welcome  5:00 – Indonesian W'p	20	21	8:00 – Meditation 9:30 – Meditation 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner 5:30 – Meditation 6:30 – Pastoral Care C'tee 7:30 – Book Club	23	24	25
9:30 – Ian Ferguson Elders Commissioning AGM & Lunch  5:00 – Indonesian W'p	27	28	<b>March 1</b> 8:00 – Meditation 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner  7:30 – Property C'tee	2	3	4
			<b>7:30 – Ash Wednesday</b>	7:30 – D&E C'tee	7:00 – Table Church	9:30- Permaculture Workshop  2:30 – Coffee
				10:00 – Olive Way	6:30 – Leaders' Retreat 7:30 – YUCY	9:00 – Leaders' Retreat  2:30 – Coffee
				10:00 – Olive Way	** - Student House Retreat	** - Student House Retreat 10:00 – Food Co-op
				10:00 – Olive Way	7:00 – Table Church 7:30 – YUCY	
					7:00 – Table Church	2:30 – Coffee