

THE OLIVE BRANCH

December 2016 Brunswick Uniting Church Congregation Worship - 9:30 am

> Meditation

The Beloved Child

She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger... (Luke 2:7 KJV)

Modern translations of the Christmas story say Mary wrapped Jesus in "bands of cloth" which seems to me to be a sadly missed opportunity to use the excellent word "swaddling". Luke the gospel writer tells us twice in the Christmas story that Jesus was "swaddled". Why? It was normal practice to tightly wrap newborn babies in the ancient middle east, so why does he bother to mention it at all, let alone twice? Luke's two mentions of swaddling added to all the other mentions of swaddling in the whole bible (including the Apocrypha) makes 4 mentions all together – that's a lot of bible with a lot of babies being born in it but almost no mention swaddling. Why is it so important to Luke?

One of the other mentions of swaddling is in the Wisdom of Solomon:

*I also am mortal, like everyone else,
a descendant of the first-formed child of earth;
and in the womb of a mother
I was moulded into flesh...
And when I was born,
I began to breathe the common air,
and fell upon the kindred earth;
my first sound was a cry, as is true of all.
I was nursed with care in swaddling clothes.
For no king has had a different
beginning of existence;
there is for all one entrance into life,
and one way out. (Wisdom of Solomon 7:1-6)*

By mentioning swaddling, Luke reminds us that Jesus begins life like every other person. Wrapped in his swaddling clothes the "Son of the Most High" is wrapped also in the humility and mortality of humanity, he enters fully into our existence.

The only other mention of swaddling in the bible is a negative one by the prophet Ezekiel – it jars with the spirit of Christmas because it describes a neglected and abused child.

As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water, nor wrapped in swaddling clothes. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you out of compassion. (Ezekiel 16:4).

Swaddling clothes are connected with care and nurture – swaddling means beloved. The absence of swaddling is an absence of affection and love – neglected.

So when Luke tells us (twice) that Jesus was swaddled, this is the first hint of what we will hear later from God. As Jesus comes up out of the waters of his baptism God says: "You are my beloved Son." Thus Mary's love and care in swaddling her baby embodies God's love.

See the swaddled newborn in the manger. What achievement has earned him this love? What status? By comparison with whom does he deserve to be swaddled so tightly in compassion?

This child is loved not as one in comparison with others. He is loved as original, for the fact of himself.

This child is loved before achievement – he has done nothing. And, therefore, his eventual achievement will not be the effort to earn favour, but the abundant overflow of his sense of being loved.

This child is loved not in recognition of his status, nor to confer status upon him. He is no-one important ... yet.

In this moment, all he has is love. All he has done is receive love. All he is in this moment is beloved.

The beloved child is the natural condition of human existence.

The beloved swaddled child is God with us.

Ian Ferguson

References:

This reflection is based on the discussion of the beloved child in John Shea's book, *Starlight* (1992), p91&93

> Worship Calendar

Advent

This year our worship is being shaped in part by the Christmas Bowl liturgies written by Saide Cameron.

Advent 1, 27th November: Keep awake! Be ready!
We are called to walk the path of peace

Advent 2, 4th December: Prepare the Way
We are called to repentance

Advent 3, 11th December: Rejoice and be glad
We are called to lift up the lowly

Advent 4, 18th December: Emmanuel 'God is with us'
We are called to be followers of Christ

The sculpture project developed by Simone Alesich and created by the SMP program was introduced during worship on 27th November and we sang Julie Perrin's song 'Flame of Love' for the first time.

Blue Christmas

This year Blue Christmas has been moved to a Wednesday evening - **14th December** at 7:30 pm.

This is a quiet service of reflection & meditation for people who want a space to grieve, remember loved ones who have died, look back over a difficult year, seek peace in troubled times or simply take some time away from the busyness of this particular time of the year.

Christmas Eve Pageant

Join us on **Christmas Eve** at 7 pm for '**A call through time**'. Come and find out how the characters in the Nativity discover that they are called to be makers of joy, love and peace.

If you have any questions about the pageant please contact Saide Cameron (producer) 0407 096 743 or Caitlin Mullen (director) 0411 033 153



Christmas Eve

We gather again at 11:30 pm to welcome in Christmas Day with candle light and a celebration of Holy Communion.

Christmas Day

The Light shines in the darkness

We are called to celebrate the glory of God

Christmas Day on a Sunday - Ian is very happy!!

We celebrate the birth of Christ at our regular worship time of 9:30am.

The poster for Christmas worship is available [here](#)

January

We look forward to welcoming Graeme Garrett (8/1), Andy Calder (15/1) and Sunny Chen (22/1) as our preachers while Ian enjoys annual leave.

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> Culture of Safety

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, 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. Please contact Helen in person or on mobile number 0423 009 813.

> Sharing our Faith

Flame of Love

Julie Perrin talks about 'Flame of Love', the new Advent Candle lighting song.

I wrote this song after hearing the plans for Simone Alesich's sculpture and the cradle-like place for the Christ child. We had an inspiring meeting preparing for Advent with some of the Worship Committee and the following week this song came to me while I was walking along the Merri Creek.

Helen Burnham made the refrain and Julia and Elaine Potter did a brilliant job of interpreting my voice recording and arranging it into a singable song! Warm thanks to these musicians for their gracious expertise.

In this song we sing our gladness to God as we ask for the mystery of God's presence to be with us. The first verse is calling to the Holy One and is written from the point of view of a child –

- imagining the Holy Spirit as a flame that warms our hearts and makes a home there like a cradle for the Christ child.
- we remember Jesus was once a baby who like us needed cradling and rocking,
- and as we make our hearts ready, Jesus' presence grows in us and he walks alongside us as we keep growing.

The second verse is written from the point of view of being and adult looking out on their lives and recognising all the ways the Holy One has been their light and warmth and laughter and comfort.

This song reminds us to make our hearts ready, to keep them open.

We sing the words 'Holy Spirit' in two ways at the beginning of the song we sing the word Spirit as if we are reaching out and longing for God to come to us so remember longing and long.

At the end we sing Spirit short Spirit like the flicker of a flame.

Olive Way "Mind the Door" Roster

Thank you to those who volunteer regularly on Sundays to maintain a safe watch on the automatic door in the Olive Way space. Occasionally we may forget our important commitment. When you receive your BUC Roster from Saide please put the date of your rostered duty in your diary schedule. Our children and their parents will thank you for your attendance and care on your rostered day. Additional volunteers for the Olive Way Door roster always welcome. Contact Saide Cameron.

Sometimes we long for God and other times we feel God is with us in a flash.'

Flame of Love

Flame of love
Holy Spirit
Make in us your
Cradle home
For the Christ Child
Who will meet and
Walk with us til
We are grown

*Flame of love
Holy Spirit
Make in us your
Cradle home*

Light of laughter
Balm in sorrow
You have been our
Cradle home
Call our names in
to the silence
Flame of love by
You we're known

Words: Julie Perrin

Music: Helen Burnham & Julie Perrin

Arranged: Julia Potter & Elaine Potter

ArtStop - featuring Cathy Lim



This month, we feature the art of Catherine Lim which many of you would instantly recognise as the beautiful florals hanging in the Olive Way. Catherine presents as a quiet and unassuming lady who is very humble about her talent. In fact, she simply does what comes naturally to her on the page; having only discovered drawing and painting when she was asked by the BUC deacon at the time, Richard Arnold to lead the art group eight years ago! Prior to that, Cathy felt no inclination to art making or art appreciation. She was working in the kitchen with the Rev Ray Gormann when the request for her to help start an art programme came as a total surprise. Cathy took the opportunity and discovered that she enjoyed drawing and painting flowers as it gave her a sense of calm and peace. The journey of discovery has led Cathy to using different mediums such as acrylic, pastel (both oil and chalk), pencil and charcoal. Her style is captivating to watch and is inimitable. Her technique unfolds with a grace that is meditative, confident and expressive. The size of the blank paper is not daunting to Cathy as she begins so simply and fills the page yet the balance of the composition is completely intrinsic. Here are a few of Cathy's works to inspire and encourage wonder.

We invite you to visit Artstop over the summer months to watch Cathy's process and the other artists' art making in that time. Our last date for this year is 7/12 and we will reconvene in the third week of January. We meet at BUC (west end) on Wednesdays between 10am and 12noon. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Leanne Salau or Ann Soo.

It has been a wonderful year of Artstop and we would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their interest, prayers and support over the year. A special mention to those who have so generously offered in time, effort and by donation to this amazing and life giving program. We look forward to your continued support so that we can work corroboratively with Arts Access Victoria to enable the best nurturance of these wonderful talented folk.



Ann Soo and Leanne Salau

A farewell of sorts



Pageant 2007



Camp 2010



Having fun, 2010



Pageant 2010 producers

During worship on **20th November** Ian acknowledged Matthew Cameron's upcoming marriage to Lydia Jacka on 26th November. Here I've expanded on what he said and included 'a few photos', just for fun.

Matthew was born into the South West Brunswick UC congregation, baptised as a baby and later confirmed as a member of the Brunswick UC congregation.



NCYC 2014



NCYC 2010

Over all these years Matthew has been an active participant in the life of the congregation. As a child this involved enjoying the playgroup that happened alongside the Mary & Martha group, going to Sunday School and KUCA, taking part in Christmas Eve pageants, going on Church Camps.



NCYC 2014



Telling us about NCYC 2010

As a teenager he went to YUCY, continued taking part in the pageants & camps, drummed regularly in worship and went to NCYC (twice). As a young adult he became a YUCY leader, went on more camps (joining in family story telling), participated in a National Young Adult Leaders Conference, redeveloped the programming for our church website and took on more roles on the roster. Throughout all these years he made himself available for many behind the scenes tasks and helped out in numerous ways.



Camp 2014



Camp 2015

Matthew's faith is lived out in action and when asked why he continues to attend worship regularly he might be heard to comment that 'this is what we do, it's part of the pattern of our lives'. I remember reading his application to attend the NYALC in 2012 and being deeply moved by the beautiful way that he expressed his faith.



Camp 2016



On the roster, 2016

Matthew & Lydia are both leaving their home congregations to find a new spiritual home for themselves as a couple. Matthew will be missed in more ways than many of us might realise. I'm sure he won't be a stranger to us though and they may even come along to worship from time to time but it will be different.



Possibly the last time drumming for our congregation, 20/11/16

Saide Cameron, (attempting to wear my editor's hat)

> Mission Planning Report

The following quotes were included in the Mission Planning report. Some were read as part of the presentation at the Congregational Meeting on November 20th 2016.

These quotes are a sample of the many responses received throughout the Mission Planning. They have been collected from butchers' paper brainstorming, committee reports, emails in responses to the 'mission question of the week' in the Olive Press and conversations that have taken place over the past few months.

They indicate some of the many fruits that are ripening among and around us.

Some of you may have read these already in the full version of the report. You can download the full text of the report here. In this version you'll find photos to accompany some of the quotes to help us build a picture of what we've heard from each other so far...

"I'm nurtured and sustained at BUC for professional work on justice and peace making. I also get to know and celebrate others' work!"



"We allow people space to grieve and to doubt and we trust God's holding in those times."

"In a conversation with a person I thought was passionate about BUC, I discovered that there are gaps, barriers and people who feel forgotten. It may be easy for some of us to feel at home but a challenge for many LGBTI people, students, and people with mental health issues."



"The sermon is a focal point of the Sunday morning service and I look forward each week to the teaching and listening with others as well as for my own nourishment."

"When I was speaking to someone about BUC, they asked lots of questions. They were open and interested, not hostile. I enjoyed sharing this part of my life with them. We both learnt things - me through the nature of his questions."

"The Olive Way and ArtStop is a place for people to drop in and have a cuppa and something to eat, to share. People make art! It's an open and accepting environment for people to come to. It provides community to the people that come and is not driven by numerical outcomes."

"We speak out, and offer Sanctuary."



"I feel strongly connected to BUC when singing carols at Stewart Lodge to celebrate Christmas. There is a sense of welcome: smiles, handshakes, movement and stillness, faces touched in tenderness."

"We provide tangible ways for children to engage with Christ".

"Holy week worship is a time when everything else in my life fades away. Telling the story of our faith at this time shapes my thinking absorbs my energy and gives me joy. I see people experiencing the story. I hear people telling me that it's been amazing. I taste the joy of being community in the essence of my being. I feel alive."

"Inter- generational joy!"

"Nourish: church with children. It was quiet and concentrated. Everyone was engaged- all ages. We deepened with scripture through story telling. We prayed with deep spirituality. We were invited in a circle. We broke bread as one body."



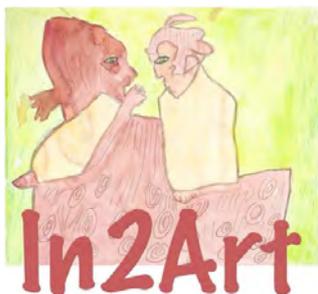
"Our communication strategies seek to build community through connection. These strategies tell people that no matter whether you are near or far, regular or occasional worshippers that we are all members of the body of Christ in all our glorious strength and fragility."

"We provide a pleasant, welcoming and safe environment for visitors, our students, those that hire our facilities, and our neighbours - places for worship, outreach, lodging, building community and engaging in diverse activities..."

"I know I am not involved right now but I want to answer because Mulling, for me, is what made me feel part of the church community. I think it is possible that I would have never felt like I was part of the church without connecting to this smaller group."



"At the launch of the In2Art Exhibition I heard stories of people finding a home in our buildings. I discovered a whole other community alive within our community. I learnt more about a program where people had found their voice, where their art was honoured and valued and treasured. And I saw vulnerable people freely offering their gifts in a place of safety and love..."



At the Olive Way and ArtStop people find a place of nurture and welcome. They find a safe place to explore their creativity, to share their gifts. We open our doors three days a week and we say we love you, you are welcome, you are valued. And in doing this we are enriched beyond measure. And it's amazing because it all began with two people opening the doors nine years ago simply providing a warm space and something to eat. Now we have visual and performing arts, lunch, dancing and more. God is at work in and through us."

"Having space and time for happy and hard times."

"At the Asylum Seekers Welcome Centre Volunteers dinner earlier this year an asylum seeker sang a song he had composed for us. It was a heart stopping deep lament and celebration of his new life in Australia. A Church Council meeting was occurring and they stopped because of the strength and meditative nature of the singing."

"We respect spirituality of children."



"Moreland Together is an idea [initiated by members of BUC and] conceived in September 2016 by members of the Moreland community including representatives of local Christian and Muslim groups, civil organisations and local government. While our inspiration for this social justice network is faith-driven, we want to build a united community movement that includes all demographics and voices of the Moreland area in promoting unity and solidarity in our wonderful multicultural community."



"Out and About is a group of people that has acquired a lifetime of skills, knowledge and wisdom, and we need to think of creative ways of harnessing and sharing this precious resource."

"Our sharing with others grows from the grace and generosity we have received."

"Church is an ideal place to try things out. Our structure allows people to experiment which gives people confidence."

"The seeds of what we wish for are already here!"



"We are committed to protecting the environment, eg Powershop, Blessing of the Bikes, reusable coffee mugs, plastic free July (little things make a ripple)."

We cherish God as Church, the Body of Christ, and extend the boundaries of our physical Church to encompass Jesus call for us to be a loving community - to love God with all our heart and soul and love our neighbour as ourselves. In caring for our property, and making it accessible to our communities, we create space for these loving relationships with Christ."

You can download the full text of the report [here](#).

You'll find in it, an invitation to "live the questions" that arise from the discernment that we have done and from the diagrams that seek to represent who we are and how we currently relate to one another.

The purpose of the report is to aid us in sharing with one another what's come out of the Mission Planning for us; to assist us in reflecting on the current life of Brunswick Uniting Church; to give us new ways of talking about who we are and how we relate to one another; and to Shed light on particular situations that are in need of action and reflection at this time eg. the recent review of the Student House.

Church Council will continue to reflect on the report in December, as well as at the retreat in February with a view to shaping immediate, one year and five year actions. An update on these plans will be presented at the AGM in February 2017.

Each committee, group and individual within BUC are also invited to reflect on the report and their responses to the Mission Planning questions as they plan and work through 2017, praying about it and sharing with others our observations and insights.

Steph Gesling, BUC Mission Planning Co-ordinator

> News

Sarah's placement concludes



Sarah Tomilson concluded her placement as a student minister with us on **Sunday 6th November**. We participated in the formal ritual of conclusion and blessing. The focus of Sarah's placement has been in Children & Youth Ministry and so to celebrate her time with us Julie has provided this delightful selection of photos.



one student minister consults with another



Sarah Tomilson at SMP



Sarah in listening mode



Sarah joining in SMP



Sarah leading an SMP romp - breaking the chains that bind!



Sarah making binoculars at AAW

Creating harmony with all creation

30th October

To conclude the Season of Creation series we welcomed Graeme Garrett as our preacher bringing all our reflections on creation together.

Saide gathered up all the themes of the Season in a responsive [prayer of adoration and confession](#).

Saide, Jan and the children had a chat about Zaccheus climbing the sycamore tree to see Jesus and then Jan shared three stories about special trees in her life. We had fun singing 'The Tree Song' with actions.



Graeme invited us to reflect on [Zaccheus and the sycamore tree](#) exploring the ways in which trees give us 'a leg up' enabling us to see a bigger world with its bigger truth and bigger vision ... to see at least a bit of God's great creation. He illustrated the sermon with images of beautiful trees, stories from our congregation and insights from the book 'The Hidden Life of Trees' by Peter Wohlleben.



Kirsty offered [Prayers of the People](#) again referencing the themes of the whole Season of Creation.

A wonderful celebration



On **Saturday 26th November** Matthew Cameron & Lydia Jacka were married at BUC surrounded by family and friends. After the beautiful and traditional ceremony, officiated over by Ian Ferguson and Edie Ashley (priest of the Anglican Church of St Peter by the Lake, Paynesville), photos were taken in the church garden by Ken Morrison (*please note that the photos in this story were not taken by Ken*). We appreciated the talented generosity of our musicians Natalie Sims, Shawn Whelan, Elaine Potter, Colin Hunter and Alistair Hunter both during the service and at the reception later. We enjoyed an absolutely sumptuous afternoon tea in the hall made possible by many generous offers of food. The flowers that filled the hall with the most wonderful fragrance and beauty together with the bouquets and button holes for the bridal party and the flowers in the church were all arranged by Valmai Brunlow in consultation with Gabriel (Lydia's brother and former student house program member) and with the assistance of her friend Eileen.

Ray & I are so very grateful for the abundant love that made this such a special and memorable occasion for our extended families. Thank you, thank you to everyone for all your love, prayers, well wishes for our family and especially for Matthew & Lydia.

Saide Cameron



> Special Events

Christmas Bowl FUNdraising Stall

After worship on **Sundays 4th & 11th December** you are all invited to enjoy buying Christmas gifts for family & friends from the Bake, Craft & Preserves stall. All proceeds will support the amazing projects sponsored by the Christmas Bowl.

Singing on the Steps

Join in the fun of singing Christmas Carols on the steps facing Sydney Rd after worship on the fourth Sunday of Advent, **18th December**.

We make a joyful sound and have fun singing all our favourite carols all while attracting the admiring attention of passersby.

(Let's hope for better weather than last year's extreme heat which cancelled the event.)



2014 Singing on the Steps

Stewart Lodge Carols

Come along to Stewart Lodge (home to John, Gavin, Tracey and many more), 85 Stewart St. Brunswick on **Wednesday 21st December** at 6:30pm to sing carols and then share in the joy and fun of gift giving and supper. (Bring a plate of supper to share.) See more here.



Carols at the Manse

Come and enjoy a relaxing evening of carol singing, poetry and stories at the manse on **Thursday 22nd December**, 7pm. This is a Christmas Bowl FUNdraising event.



2014 Carols at the Manse

> Pastoral Care News

Compassion - Personal Prayer Ministry

From time to time we are all confronted with situations which are stressful and with which we feel overwhelmed. The PC team has gathered together a group of caring members who have promised to spend some time each day lighting a candle and praying a prayer which includes the names those who have requested this.

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. Prayers will be offered every day and continue until you request to be withdrawn. 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

Compassion - Olive Press Prayer Cycle

The Prayer Cycle has been in operation since April this year. We hope you have found it a useful way to pray through the month for all the different programs and individuals within and beyond our congregation as well our care for the earth and all her creatures.

If you have any suggestions for prayers that would be good to include as part of this cycle please email saide.cameron@bigpond.com.

Gathering as Community

There continues to be an abundance of ways to gather as community, many of which happen as the natural rhythm of our life as a congregation and community. The Community of Communities concept described in the Mission Planning Reports highlighted this beautifully. Whether you are part of a group, a committee, a program, a regular worshipper and most likely some combination of any or all of these it feels like there are so many possibilities. The Community Team of the Pastoral Care committee seeks to have a sense of oversight of all these gatherings 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.

The **Congregation Lunch** held following the Congregational Meeting on **Sunday 20th November** came with the invitation to 'Bring a plate to share' which many of us did in the Youth Hall. It was a lovely relaxed time. Thanks to everyone who came and shared and to Rachel who made sure that everything was set up and cleaned up afterwards.



The Community Team will be meeting in the new year to review the Mission Planning Report and take direction from there to plan for 2017. Join us if you are interested.

We are: Ian, Saide, Kirsty, Rachel and Sarah.

We meet every couple of months.

> Children, Youth & Young Adult Ministry News



Last Christmas playing with the knitted Nativity



What will Ian David do next?



Question for SMP about the Lord's Prayer



SMP and worship for children at BUC

Looking back on the year we have had some highlights and memorable moments. As well as asking the children about theirs, parents and volunteers might like to remember their own. What were the most memorable moments and activities for you and your child(ren) this year in worship, SMP, Easter Storytelling and Nourish? Are there prayers, songs, actions that have become a part of your family life?

Think through the seasons of Advent, the Pageant, Easter, Church Camp, Ian David's residency, Sarah Tomilson's student ministry. Right now we are making an advent sculpture with Simone Alesich, It has been great to have the creativity and stimulation of these guest leaders but to some extent it has diverted our attention from the reality that we do not currently have enough volunteers to lead three groups and meet Culture of Safety standards of at least 2 leaders per group.

By mid-year the Children and Youth Committee were looking at some altered attendance and availability patterns for parents and children who have previously been at the core of the program. We noticed strong and regular numbers in the P-2 age group and a much more variable patterns in Years 3-6 Primary and 7-9 Secondary groups. Anecdotally we are aware of absences due to sporting and musical commitments but we want to do a more thorough review in 2017.

During December the primary school children will remain in worship and participate in the liturgy as well as related artmaking in the gathering space.

Here are some of the questions we are wondering about and would like members of the congregation to think about too.

How do we continue to integrate children into noticing and participating in what is happening in worship?

As parents, worship leaders and a congregation, how can we enable focus and attention as well as some freedom and flexibility for responding to the needs of all?

If we keep children in worship more frequently are there practices we need to develop together?



3-6 SMP March 2016, the hierarchy of power under the Roman Empire



May 29 with Ian David



An epic SMP class led by Andrew & Jill Moorhouse



We would love to hear your thoughts about these questions when parents and SMP vols meet on **11th December** and more widely we will survey people next year.

Julie Perrin, Children & Families worker



October 9 - AAW



Hanging the banner for Blessing of the Bikes



As well as making binoculars to look for signs for God's kingdom for November 6 AAW we added to these posters designed by Helen Burnham



YUYC & OG Update

The YUCY crews have each had some pretty rad meet-ups of late! The younger YUCYs were far too up on their Halloween general knowledge in an epic scavenger hunt a couple of YUCYs ago as we delved into the Pagan history of All Saints and pondered the many great people that came before us. The YUCY OGs pondered life in a different context: while swimming in Gen Mullen's pool and eating amazing burritos! As usual, we talked about life happenings and the almost-adult nature of their plans for the next challenge: VCE.

Student House Update

The anticipated end of exams and assignments for the 2016 university year has arrived. This joyous relief is definitely tangible in the student house community, however a little bitter-sweet as it marks the end of many members' time in the student house family. It is with heavy hearts that we're farewelling David, Abi, Caleb and Lloyd to continue on their wonderful, unpredictable journeys of adulthood. Last Sunday we celebrated these young people's place in the Student House and blessed them, offering a small of the Brunswick Uniting Olive Tree and this written prayer to hold with them: "Blessings on you as you journey on from the Student House Community. Brunswick Uniting holds you in our prayers in your travels onward into this new and exciting time".



With these sad departures, next year will see some new faces in the community. It's an exciting time of change, and throughout the last couple of months, myself, Ann Soo and Anita Major-Brown have been compiling a review of the Student House Program to take stock and ensure we as the Student House community are heard in such a time of transition.

The completed report is currently being circulated around the Ministry Team and Church Council and will be available to the congregation very soon. To give you all a bit of context, here is the Preamble and some quotes which provided insight into the experiences of those in and supporting the Student Houses.

Anika Jensen, Youth & Student House Co-ordinator

Student House Review Report Preamble

The Student House Program is highly valued by students, community and the church. Throughout the past year the need for transparent intentions and framework has become clear to ensure that all parties are operating under the same principles. With a new coordinator and a time of transition for the committee, it seemed good timing for a review, especially as there has never been an intentional review in the formation of the SHP in the late 1990s.

Anika, Ann and Anita met for a month in September/October 2016 and coordinated the gatherings of reflections on the Student House Program (SHP) from past and current students, committee members, Ministers of the Word and Coordinators. The data has been rich and enlightening. It has shown overwhelmingly that importance of the SHP as a life giving and life saving outreach of the Brunswick Uniting Church (BUC).

This review has been important to gain a better understanding of the needs and direction of the SHP and has also provided a space for relevant parties to debrief, reflect and acknowledge the place of the Program in our lives.

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

"The student house isn't it's own intentional community, but the intention of the BUC. I'd never thought about it like that before" – Church Council Member

"The Student House is home and has provided a space to explore faith and advocacy" – Student

"Needs a whole community approach" – Ex-Committee Member

"Household worked well, safe space to explore faith... Develop and understand own faith separate to my family's." – Ex-Student

CY&YA Events

Pre-school Parents

Catch up over brunch at Anitas' 16 Temple St West Brunswick

Wednesday 7th December 9.30am -12 noon, please bring grazing food to share.

Parents & SMP volunteers

Briefing on **Sunday 11th December** from 11am - 12.15pm

Please keep this time available to hear Culture of Safety info and give feedback for SMP planning.

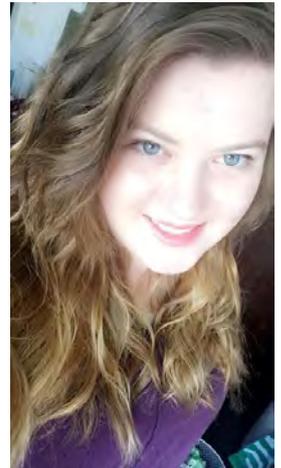
> Student House Faith Spot

Hi everybody! My name is Emily Kidd in case you weren't aware. This is my third year in the student house program!

I moved here to begin studying a Bachelor of Education at RMIT Brunswick, three years down and only one to go. I hope to one day specialise in teaching visual arts. Art is one of my passions, throw in reading and you've pretty much got me figured out.

I am working at Savers, just up the road from the church if you ever want to come and visit me, you would brighten my day!

And because mine is the December faith spot, I'd like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



> More News

Spinifex Blessing

Spinifex Blessing is a collection of 3 pocket sized volumes with 8 stories in each, many of which have been in the Sunday Age Faith column. The three volumes are sold as a set at \$15. If you buy 3 sets you get a free copy of Oscar-the-ten-dollar-dog!

Spinifex Blessing Stories of Faith and Life



Julie Perrin at Tellingwords

www.tellingwords.com.au | 0409 019 987

Part of the profits will be donated to PEN international, the writer's arm of Amnesty International.

The collection is reviewed in the printed version of December Crosslight, p 18.

> Olive Way News

It's (almost) Christmas at Olive Way!

There is so much to celebrate at Olive Way as we come to the end of another wonderful year. And we're making sure we finish it off with food, love, dance and laughter!



By the time you read this, the Sydney Road Orchestra Company (SROC) will have performed their latest production "Love and Food in Brunswick" (Thursday December 1st) and, even though I'm writing this a couple of days before the performance, I know it was simply scrumptious because I had a sneak preview!

(The SROC team rehearsing)



We also recently celebrated spring with a BBQ lunch, on a day that gave us perfect weather. Abi and I were pretty impressed with our cooking efforts - the two vegetarians handled sausages and hamburgers like professionals. We had a great turn out and I hope we can do it again in the New Year.

(Enjoying a BBQ lunch)



Christmas Lunch at Olive Way!

Wednesday December 21st @ 12:30pm

Everyone is very welcome

The tinsel will be sparkling, the tables will be merry, the Christmas cracker jokes will be hilarious, carols will be sung, and:

We're having a Christmas Dance Off!

You read right – our wonderful dance teacher Ezme has been breaking some festive moves and she'll be starting the party with a dance class at 11am.

Come work up an appetite for some fine Christmas fare and join in the festive fun!

Donations of festive treats (tarts, slices, nibbles, cookies, the lovely festive nibbles that add a touch of Christmas magic) are most welcome.

It will also be my last day as Olive Way Coordinator, but I don't want to talk about that right now, because I'm in denial.

And finally, thanks everyone, especially the INCREDIBLY AWESOME Olive Way volunteer team, as well as:

Damien's SROC crew, Pete's kitchen crew, Aliey, George, Leanne, Ann and the Artstop crew, and every visitor who walked through our doors, for another cracker of a year! May 2017 be even bigger and better.

Our doors are open to everyone and we hope to see you at Olive Way soon.

Fi Bottcher, Olive Way Coordinator (just for a little bit longer)

feigh.b@gmail.com, 0421 027 467

> Regular Events

Saturday afternoon coffee

Meet at Manakish, 161 Sydney Rd. Brunswick, at 2:30 pm, usually on the **first Saturday** each month. It's very informal, and all women are most welcome. For any queries regarding transport, contact Leanne Salau, 9386 1484.

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

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

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

This month we are meeting on **Tuesday 6th December**, 7pm at Princes park for a Christmas picnic.

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.

The Olive Way closes on 21st December with Christmas lunch.

New volunteers are always welcome.
Contact Fiona Bottcher, ph. 0421 027 467.

Book Club at BUC

7.30 – 9 pm, Wednesday 22nd February 2017

Youth Hall, Brunswick UC

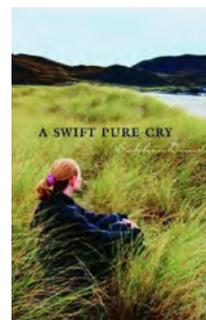
Two books have been chosen for our first meeting in 2017.

'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
or Christine 9386 8919 christine@hornby.id.au



Out and About Group

Following our enjoyable End-of-year luncheon the group will be in recess until February 2017. Out and About is a social group for older, active women and men. Contact Helen Rowe for further information. Contact Helen for further information.

Mobile 0423 009 813 or email helen.rowe@rocketmail.com

Brunswick Uniting Food Co-Op

Have you been to Food Co-op yet?

Olive Way, third Saturdays, 10 am – 12 pm.

Next Food Co-op Distribution Day - Saturday 10 December from 10am - 12 noon.

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

Further information from Helen Rowe 0423 009 813
or Christine Hornby 0405 102 799

> Reports

Church Council

The big event for Council this month has been the Congregational Meeting, at which Daniel, Kate, Steph and Shawn were re-elected for the forthcoming term. It was also at this meeting that Steph, who is now concluding as our Mission worker, presented the Mission Planning Report, in which the missional landscape of our congregation was represented in two different ways: as a series of variously overlapping communities, and as a tree, consisting of fruit, roots and trunk. This report has been circulated to the congregation to be viewed and considered as we turn to the next phase of our Mission review.

As you shall see when you read the report, it is not intended to serve as a Strategic Plan. It contains no project proposals and timeframes. Rather, it is the product of a period of consultation and discernment, and lays out a theological and organisational interpretation of our community, to serve as a foundation that future practical goals and projects can be built upon. Church Council intends to begin this next, task-based phase of formulating short and long term goals at our retreat in the early part of 2017. We are hoping to open this retreat beyond the immediate membership Council to members of other Church committees and communities. We will continue to develop

these plans over the coming year, in consultation with other committees and the broader congregation.

The other important item at our Congregational Meeting was the introduction of the National Church Life Survey, which all BUC members have been encouraged to complete, either online or on paper.

An important piece of Council business in the preceding month has been to consider staffing questions for the coming year. We have decided to renew Anika Jensen and Fiona Bottcher's contracts as Youth Worker/Student House Coordinator and Olive Way coordinator in 2017. We intend to extend Fiona's hours to 19 per week, in recognition of the demands of her job that are not currently receiving remuneration, and convene a working group to consider her replacement as she leaves to pursue her vocation in ministry at the end of that year. We extend our great thanks for their wonderful work in 2016.

In the meantime, we warmly invite you to our full program of coming events over the Advent season, including the traditional Christmas pageant and carols singing at Stewart Lodge.

Daniel Broadstock

Property Committee

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

- In relation to rising damp, inspected the sump in the Olive Way and it is still dry
- A new key safe has been installed on the church property
- Power points for the west end of the hall and the Food Co-op are now operational
- A hook has been installed on the wall outside the office.

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

- Assess rising damp damage at a number of locations.
- Finalise the church roof project; synod report, slate tiles & repairs to stain glass window.
- Determine action to be taken in relation to the church spire. Awaiting a quote to paint the spire.
- Manse cracks filled and painted.
- Obtained a quote to have the faulty down light dimmer replaced as required. The committee felt the work was 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.
- Investigating the professional cleaning of the hall kitchen oven multiple times per year to maintain them in a clean

state. Jenny to ascertain if another clean is required. Intention is to split the costs with main users of the kitchen. Awaiting Ian and Shawn to negotiate with the ASWC and BIUC.

- 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 are being purchased, to then be installed.
- Finalise the insurance claim associated with the break-in. Awaiting the repairs to the damaged church furniture.
- Update the cleaning contractor arrangements, currently in discussions with Fresh Start Asset Services, Lentara's cleaning social enterprise business. Contract has to be restructured due to the organisational changes in the UCA agencies. Revised contract has been obtained, to be reviewed for 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.

Ray Cameron

Property Committee Extra - new member(s) needed

Fiona Bottcher is concluding her time on the Property Committee and we thank her for her contributions particularly liaising with the ASWC. The Property Committee is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all our properties including the church, hall, the Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre, Youth Hall and 4 Merri St. We also look after the Student House buildings on 278 Brunswick Rd. We meeting on the 4th Tuesday of the month and work through our extensive agenda very efficiently. Each member of the committee takes responsibility for particular tasks (see previous page) and reports back each month. Laurie Bonney is our handy man and is allocated a range of tasks as required.

We would love to welcome one or even two new members to the committee in 2017. If you are interested please speak to Ray Cameron (Elder responsible for property), 0407 883 654 or Andrew Moorhouse (Property Committee convenor), 0401 696 112.

Congregational Meeting



The Congregational Meeting for the annual Election of Elders was held after worship on Sunday 20th November. The meeting was chaired by Daniel Broadstock with minutes taken by Saide Cameron with 32 people attending and 24 offering an apology.

Following a formal welcome and affirmation of the Acknowledgment of Country offered during worship Ian Ferguson opened the meeting in prayer.

Election of Elders Four nominations were received for seven vacancies. The nominees: Daniel Broadstock (1 year), Steph Gesling (2 years), Kate Scull (1 year) and Shawn Whelan (1 year) were all previously serving Elders returning for the terms indicated in brackets. Scrutineers Meg Orton and Natalie Sims informed the meeting via the Chair that all four have been affirmed as Elders for our congregation.

Three vacancies remain on our ten member council. Council has the option to second people to the Council for a one year term. We have also, in previous years, held a follow up election as part of the Annual General meeting in February and this remains an option.



Mission Planning Report

As indicated in the Council Report Steph Gesling presented the report both verbally and visually.



Daniel concluded the meeting thanking everyone for attending and Ian offered a prayer invoking God's Spirit to send us on our way.

Saide Cameron
Congregation Secretary

JAM News

JAM ABCD busy and fun as usual - December 2016

We were pleased to welcome a couple of guests to our JAM/ABCD meeting on 17th November, particularly as Helen brought one of her beautiful pots of soup! Tim Budge led an interesting discussion around the potential for BUC folk to visit Cath James and Joel Meadows in Castlemaine to learn about Permaculture and Christian faith in early 2017.

Helen Rowe reported on the Food Coop and we all agreed to support the Food Coop to recruit more volunteers and to put out a call for a volunteer Coordinator for 2017. The Food Coop is humming along but the back of house work needs a solid team of willing hands to make it light work.

While not too many people attended the Creating Cool Homes for Summer session with the Moreland Energy Foundation (MEFL), we collected some great contacts and resources to share with BUC. If you are interested in ways to make your house more efficient, why not ask us about ECOMAD!

The other exciting news is that BUC plans to join forces with the ASWC and the Department of Justice to revive our community

garden beds and explore options for additional gardens out the front of the church. We'll even be able to use our newly acquired permaculture skills. Watch this (garden) space and contact David Stephen, 0413 193 943 s if you want to find out more.

We always have lots of amazing ideas but we've decided to focus our efforts for 2017 on:

- Rallies
- Community Garden
- Civic dialogues – ask us about them!
- Tower room displays
- Supporting specific projects, eg the Permaculture outing.

We are pleased that Gwen Arnold will join our group in 2017 and welcome others to join us for lots of enthusing, dreaming and exciting discussions, held every month or so, over a yummy pot luck meal! (Oh and did I mention Saide's desserts!!!)

The JAM/ABCD committee.

Worship Committee

At our November meeting Helen invited us to reflect on significant people in our faith journeys which lead to some interesting discussions. As always we reflected on the preceding works services and very efficiently worked through our long list of agenda items including **children in worship** - Julie Perrin and Saide Cameron are updating guidelines to reflect current and emerging practice; **Pageant** - all on track and looking good, many thanks to Caitlin Mullen and Rachel Beagley; **Rostra project** - Wayne Matthews and a few helpers have prepared six sets of stages, a request has been made to Property Committee to arrange appropriate storage, many thanks to Wayne for your on this project; **Advent worship** - shaped in part by the Christmas Bowl liturgies prepared by Saide and the Sunday Morning Sculpture project designed by Simone Alesich, the Christmas Bowl is a beautiful signing bowl loaned by Michael Rigby and we are delighted that Julie Perrin has written a new song 'Flame of Love', see p3; **Christmas worship** - approved the publicity material prepared by Samuel Rauert (thank you Samuel!); **Offering bowls** - noted concerns about the size and shape of our bowls, we will observe this in the next month or so; **Christmas Bowl** - discussed our congregation response to the appeal and noted that there was a significant drop in donations from 2014-2015 (about \$1,500 less); **Tower Room** - noted that David Stephens is continuing to consult with Nick Burnham about improved lighting, also that the SMP sculpture will be displayed in the window during Advent; and finally **Committee Membership** - sadly Olivia Potter indicated that she is finishing up her time on the committee after three years, we expressed our appreciation for her many creative and insightful contributions to the worship life of our congregation. Please see the **Worship Calendar**, p2 for details about worship over December & January.

30/10 Pentecost 24 Habbakuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Luke 19:1-10 As noted in News, p9 we welcomed Graeme Garrett as our preacher to conclude the Season of Creation. Jan Morgan helped to shape the time with stories about special trees as we reflected on the importance of trees in our lives.

Graeme began his sermon commenting on the appeal of the story of Zacchaeus and the sycamore tree to him in relation to Zacchaeus' stature. Graeme said that Luke emphasizes this because *'he wants to highlight that when it comes to an encounter with Jesus Christ we are all short of stature, all too small in spirit to be up to it. . . Luke presents in this story for us Zacchaeus as a guide to a powerful faith . . . he finds the famous sycamore tree and gets a leg up and now he can see'*. Graeme invited us to think back to a moment in our faith journey when we have caught *'a real glimpse of Christ'*. He commented that we have some moments, places in common *'this place, this lovely building is in a way a sycamore tree in our crazy world . . . Here we are often, week by week given a leg up . . . Here we are given a real chance to compensate for our smallness of spiritual stature'*. He then went on to acknowledge the reality of the sycamore tree beyond its use as a metaphor in the sermon and invited us to look down, up and around us to see all the different types of wood that supports us in our worship.



Graeme showed us Andy Calder's sycamore communion service, reminded us of the story of our Olive Tree, spoke of sacraments and told us about the book 'The Hidden Life of Trees' by Peter Wohlleben. Concluding his sermon Graeme said 'I need trees. I get so enmeshed in the urban industrial economic competitive consumer world that I lose sight of that bigger world with its bigger truth and bigger vision. I need the blackwood, the jarrah and red gum to give me a leg up to jolt me out of my self-preoccupation and allow me to see at least a bit of God's great creation; ... These created beings know and clap their hands in honour of God and I should honour them for that. So Zacchaeus ran ahead to climb the sycamore tree to see Jesus because he was going to pass that way.'



6/11 Pentecost 25 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke 20:27-38 Julie asked the children 'what are these binoculars for?' and reminded us of the binocular eyes action that we do now in the Lord's Prayer which helps us to look for the signs of God's kingdom in the world around us. They then stood up together and looked around for the strategically placed signs (comfort,



peace, kindness, love, fairness, healing) which told us about God's Kingdom. Later the children made their own binoculars and created a beautiful collage that about God's Kingdom (photos p12) in the All Age Worship activity.

Ian's sermons was shaped by two Bible readings – one, which says the Kingdom of God is right here among us, and the other which it's not here yet ... and don't even think that it is. Beginning his sermon Ian invited us into another world – ancient Rome courtesy of the film within a film 'Hail Caesar'. We watched a number of clips from the movie throughout the sermon to help us explore the presence of the Kingdom of God among us. Ian asked 'Where and how do you see the presence of God?' explaining that one of the most common metaphors or images for divine presence is the Kingdom of God. Ian reminded us that the Pharisees can't see the signs of the Kingdom of God and that Jesus tells them 'you're not seeing what's present right in front of you, the Kingdom of God is among you'. He wondered if we can see the signs of the kingdom and reminded us of what this looks like and later commented that 'we ourselves at times are blinded by the signs of its apparent absence: war, poverty ... anxieties that assail our souls and keep us from peace'. He wondered 'what keeps us from the seeing the face of Jesus and the presence of his reign already here now although not yet fully realized?' We watched Attolitus struggle to find the word 'faith' as he concluded his impassioned speech gazing up at Jesus on the cross. Ian concluded 'Even now in the world's brokenness it sometimes escapes me too and I can't see what's in front



of me but that's what we were for, as a church, as a community, friends to one another, to nurture the faith that allows us to live the Kingdom among us. Ian prayed for God to open our eyes ... 'to see the presence of the living Christ in the world to make all things new'.

After celebrating Holy Communion we participated in the ritual of concluding Sarah Tomilson's placement as our student minister (p 8). Sarah and Ian shared the offering of the blessing to send us on our way.



13/11 Pentecost 26 Isaiah 65:17-25; Luke 21:5-19 Julie asked the children if they remembered the signs of God's kingdom from the previous week which they remembered many of. She talked more about peace with them, the way that the word is said in different languages and commented on the lack of peace in the world. She reminded us again of the Lord's Prayer and the way in which the prayer helps us to pray for peace. She showed a beautiful photo of sunflowers in a cannon and with the children placed sunflowers on the cross to remind us of Jesus' commitment to peace and to help us not to live in fear..



In his sermon Ian invited us into a deeper exploration of Shalom explaining that *'it's a big word, it's a state of undividedness, completeness and harmony, prosperity, health and safety. It means being communally in sync with the purposes of God'*. He spoke of Isaiah's vision of Shalom in which the Holy One says *'for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight.'* Ian explained that the name Jerusalem is derived from *'Jeru-shalom the city of peace'* and went on to reflect with the reality of Jerusalem and global events in our time. Commenting on Isaiah's vision of Jerusalem at the most liveable city ever imagined and our current ranking as the world's most liveable city – for corporate expats – Ian said that *'I'd vote for all that (the city of Isaiah's vision) if I could be persuaded that they were more than just electioneering promises made to be broken.'* Ian went on to share two stories of his experience of Jerusalem – one of getting lost on his way to taking this night photo of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and the other of an abandoned visit to the Temple Mount in the wake of a riot on the eve of the Jewish Holy Day 'Rosh Hashanah'. Ian said that *'We live in this city by faith. We live where human divisions keep us from fully embracing the shalom, the undivided completeness and harmony that is God's way of love in creation.'* He reminded us that Jesus journeyed to this city taking its divisions into himself and healing them. He concluded *'We meet Christ here in our city as the new Jerusalem comes to be, to be a home for everyone, a place to live life with its fullness amidst a harmonious communion of lion and lamb, a cosmic remaking of the brokenness that still shadows us now in our cities. So friends here in this city may the peace of God, the Shalom of God, which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.'*



20/11 Reign of Christ Jeremiah 23:1-6; Luke 1:68-79; Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43 Commenting



on the Christmas decorations that he'd seen along the way to church he asked the children what they do at home and what we do in church to get ready for Christmas. He told us that it's exactly five weeks to Christmas (reminding us again that Christmas is on a Sunday this year - the ministers' dream.) He then introduced the Christmas Bowl which is for the Act for Peace Appeal for people in need around the world. The bowl we are using this year is *'a bowl that is a bell'*, a Buddhist prayer bowl. He talked about the way in which bells are used to call people to prayer. We prayer for each of the countries as a child rang the bowl for each group of people and country, see p 22. We dedicated the Christmas Bowl in prayer.



'The sheep of the USA have elected themselves a new shepherd without consulting us', said Ian to begin his sermon. He shared his surprise at discovering that he lived with a Trump supporter and went on to explore how in the Bible human rulers, whilst being described as shepherds of sheep, often fall short of what we might expect of shepherds. Ian drew us into the prophet Jeremiah's vision of shepherds, of God proclaiming that *'I myself will gather the remainder of my flock out of all the lands. I will be their shepherd.'* We looked at the implications for this in relation to Psalm 23 and pondered the humility of the Christmas shepherds. Ian then commented on the tension in this *'because we need human rulers'* to carry out the work of decision making and asked *'To whom do we give our primary allegiance?'* We dipped into Romans 13 and the consequent claims on our allegiance before returning to Jeremiah's world changing prophecy of the coming Messiah. Ian reminded us of references to Jesus as a shepherd through the Gospels and in the apocalyptic visions in Revelation in which *'A slaughtered Lamb with be their Good Shepherd'*. In commenting on this mixed up paradoxical vision he said *'It's like looking at a crucified man and saying 'Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.'* He went on to say that Jesus is nothing like a King and returned to Donald Trump's election and *'one of the key questions of the modern world ... can Donald Trump be presidential?'* He commented on the qualities we might expect in a human ruler and then reminded us of Jesus qualities, those that Scripture teaches us to look for in the shepherding reign of God – *'humility, compassion, moral kindness, healing, reconciling peace, the gathering of the lost, the vision of a renewed world, self emptying and self giving love – all the things that our world needs so much but which we hardly even expect or demand of our leaders'*. Ian concluded by praying our leaders that they may be good shepherds and for ourselves that we may know to demand and expect that they be so.

27/11 Advent 1 Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 24:36-44 Ian introduced the Season of Advent, as being the four Sundays before



Christmas, explaining that is a word that means coming, we're preparing of the coming of Christmas. He spoke of our four purple candles, the Christmas Bowl and the song 'Flame of Love' that Julie Perrin wrote for Advent.





Simone introduced the sculpture describing the process the children used to create the first stage of the series 'The Journey' with the bark as footprints, reminding us of Mary & Joseph's journey and a reminder of our journey towards Christmas.

On this first Sunday in Advent Ian invited us into a meditation on waiting, commenting that *'waiting is a dynamic of faith'*. Informing us that this was to be the Leonard Cohen memorial sermon he began by playing the beginning of Leonard Cohen's song 'Waiting for the miracle to come'. Ian spoke of the anxious imprisoned waiting that this song evokes and of the waiting on the other side that is freedom. He shared a story of waiting for a bus so that he could go and collect his children and the eventual miracle of a parishioner appearing to help him do just that. Ian reminded us that *'Scriptures encourage waiting'* and that *'faith is the freedom on the other side of waiting'*. He shared his own personal story of having to wait (for episodes of a TV series) in our age of instant gratification commenting that this is *'death of patience ... impatience'*. Ian went on to say *'And in case you're impatient for God's coming new creation remember what happens at the end of Advent. Christmas comes to remind us that we do not wait in vain.'* He explored this waiting further sharing a story of the *'slow hand clap of impatience'* at a ballet performance that he was part of resulting from an injury and a desperate reshuffle of the dance minutes before the opening. Ian said that *'the gospel is written into a place like this. A place of tension between the imminence and the delay of the miracle.'* Using the metaphor of dance Ian said *'But both audience and performers are waiting of the miracle of the moment when the curtain rises. Friends the curtain went up on Easter morning and we are living the dance, living the advent of the miracle, that vision on the other side of waiting, born and risen among us. Of course there's plenty of choreography still to be done. Plenty of world to be reshaped, so wait, wait in freedom, wait in active preparation, wait on God for the fulfilment of all love's longing.'* He concluded the sermon playing the end of Nick Cave's love song about the other side of waiting 'Are you the one I've been waiting for', sung by Jimmy Little. (Search for both the songs on iTunes, you'll be glad that you did!!)



Saide Cameron

Finance Committee

We have started working with Committees on developing an interim 2017 budget based on continued activity and known or anticipated changes (e.g. to stipends, interest rates, fees, rents, tradie rates, electricity and gas charges and usage, and the like).

There is also the opportunity to consider strengthening missional activity based on the Strategy report being considered, and including that in the budget

Shawn Whelan at the Congregation meeting late November suggested that Committee folk be involved in the Council retreat early next year. That retreat may also be a good time to develop the financial budget for the 2017 year, if that is among Council's intent for that retreat.

Reports from the MYOB Essentials accounting system have been sent to key members of every committee regularly in the last few months. These listed all transactions in the accounts under

their care. So far, only a few have got back with any questions or suggested changes. So either there are no questions, or it is all "lookin' good" from their POV! (Yes, we do know committee folk are all busy people.)

Linda Wannan, Mal Rowe, Ray Hardman, Tim Budge, Caleb Pratt
(Finance Committee 2016)



> Ways to give during Advent & Christmas

Christmas Bowl

Every year we support the Act for Peace Christmas Bowl Appeal through by engaging with the projects that are supported, through our prayers and with our FUNdraising. This year we have lots of opportunities to contribute to the FUNdraising through the FUNdraising Stalls and Carols at Manse (details p 10). You can also make personal tax-deductible donations through the retiring offering in the Christmas Bowl after worship during Advent and each of the Christmas services. Envelopes are available.



Stewart Lodge Gift Bag Appeal

The Gift Bag Appeal was launched during worship on 13th November. After carol singing on 21st December each of the 70 residents will receive a gift bag (value approximately \$20). Our target is for the five congregations in our ecumenical network to raise \$1,500 to make this possible. Please give generously, the box is available after worship each week until 11th December. Gift Bag preparation is happening after worship on 18th December. Lot's of fun to be had.

Christ the King

Welcoming refugee babies and their families

Your gift will help provide a baby essentials package for the #LetThemStay mums and babies who are in community detention in Australia. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

FRECALL 1800 025 101
www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 64 493 941 795

First Sunday of Advent

Providing children and families with healthcare

Your gift can provide Sri Lankan refugee mothers with the medical care they need for themselves and their families. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

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Second Sunday of Advent

Preparing for disaster

Your gift can help provide community disaster kits so communities hit by a disaster have the means to respond. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

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Third Sunday of Advent

Helping Syrian refugees to cope

Your gift can help fund mother support groups for Syrian refugee mothers so they can cope with their trauma and support their children. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

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Fourth Sunday of Advent

Encouraging peace and justice in the Philippines

Your gift can help support the production of art and drama performances to stimulate discussion on peace and justice in the Philippines. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

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Christmas Day

Growing enough to eat

Your gift can provide farmers in Zimbabwe with seeds and training so they can grow enough food for their families. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

FRECALL 1800 025 101
www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 64 493 941 795

First Sunday after Christmas

Giving hope to the future of Gaza

Your gift can help pay for a teacher's monthly salary to train youth in trades such as carpentry, furniture-making and metalwork. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

FRECALL 1800 025 101
www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 64 493 941 795

Epiphany

Providing a new start for women in Ethiopia

Your gift can help provide food preparation training for women refugees in Ethiopia so they can learn useful skills for future employment. Please give hope this Christmas. Give to the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Thank you for your support!

FRECALL 1800 025 101
www.actforpeace.org.au/christmasbowl

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 64 493 941 795

> Happy Birthday

December Louise Adams, Laurence Alvis, Siobhan Barry, Rachel Beagley, David Brown, Ben Calder, Andrew Calwell, Glenice Cook, Mikul Denison, Caro Field, Gaia Kramer, Jacqueline Matthews, Wayne Matthews, Adam Moorhouse, Charlie Moorhouse, Hamish Moorhouse. Hana Sabbagh, Daniel Whelan

January Simeon Baker, Gabriel Brown, Matilda Brown, Tameka Brown, Daniel Clough, Sheryll Coulson, Patrick Denison, Yvonne Groot, Lucy Hardman, Naomi James, Evan Kramer, Patrick Macrae, Peter McKinnon, Ruth Millard, David Moorhouse, Janine Myers, Linda Wannan, Joshua Winkler

> Preaching Plan

December 4	Ian Ferguson Advent 2, Holy Communion	December 24	Ian Ferguson, 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Pageant	January 8	Graeme Garrett
December 11	Ian Ferguson Advent 3	December 24	Ian Ferguson Christmas Eve, Holy Communion	January 15	Andy Calder
December 14	Ian Ferguson, 7:30 pm Blue Christmas	December 25	Ian Ferguson Christmas Day	January 22	Sunny Chen
December 18	Ian Ferguson Advent 4	January 1	Ian Ferguson Christmas 1	January 29	Ian Ferguson

> Lectionary

Advent

A season of preparation, beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, in which the Church recalls its hope and expectation in the coming of Christ, past, present and future.

Date	Day	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel	C
4/12	Advent 2	Is 11:1-10	Ps 72:1-7, 18-19	Rom 15:4-13	Mt 3:1-12	P
11/12	Advent 3	Is 35:1-10	Ps 146:5-10 or Lk 1:46-55	Jas 5:7-10	Mt 11:2-11	P
18/12	Advent 4	Is 7:10-16	Ps 80:1-7, 17-19	Rom 1:1-7	Mt 12:18-25	P

Christmas

The Christmas - Epiphany season includes Christmas Eve/Day and the twelve days of Christmas. It recalls the stories of the birth and infancy of Christ. The church in this time celebrates the wonder of the incarnation; the season concludes with Epiphany.

Date	Day	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel	C
25/12	Christmas Day 1	Is 9:2-7	Ps 96	Titus 2:11-14	Lk 2:1-14 (15-2)	W
	Christmas Day 2	Is 62:6-12	Ps 97	Titus 3:4-7	Lk 2:(1-7) 8-20	W
	Christmas Day 3	Is 52:7-10	Ps 98	Heb 1:1-4(5-12)	Jn 1:1-14	W
1/1	Christmas 1	Is 63:7-9	Ps 148	Heb 2:10-18	Mt 2:1-12	W
6/1	Epiphany	Is 60:1-6	Ps 72:1-7, 10-14	Eph 3:1-12	Mt 2:1-12	W

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 for 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
8/1	Baptism of Jesus	Is 42:1-9	Ps 29	Acts 10:34-43	Mt 3:13-17	W
15/1	Epiphany 2	Is 49:1-7	Ps 40:1-11	1 Cor 1:1-9	Jn 1:29-42	G
22/1	Epiphany 3	Is 9:1-4	Ps 27:1, 4-9	1 Cor 1:10-18	Mt 4:12-23	G
29/1	Epiphany 4	Mic 6:1-8	Ps 15	1 Cor 1:18-21	Mt 5:1-12	G

December 2016 Diary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Advent 2 December 4 9:30 – Ian Ferguson HC, AA FUNdraising Stall Christmas Bowl Appeal 4:00 – Sacred Harp 5:00 – Indonesian W’p 6:00 – Table Church	5	6 10:00 – Olive Way	7 9:30 – Meditation 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner	8 10:00 – Olive Way 5:30 – Pageant Rehearsal 7:00 – Pageant Rehearsal	9 5:30 – Pageant Rehearsal	10 10:00 – Food Co-op
Advent 3 11 9:30 – Ian Ferguson FUNdraising Stall Christmas Bowl Appeal 5:00 – Indonesian W’p 6:00 – Table Church	12	13 10:00 – Olive Way 6:30 – Church Council	14 8:00 – Meditation 9:30 – Meditation 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner 5:30 – Meditation 7:30 – Blue Christmas	15 10:00 – Olive Way 5:30 – Pageant Rehearsal 6:30 – Worship C’tee 7:00 – Pageant Rehearsal	16 5:30 – Pageant Rehearsal	17
Advent 4 18 9:30 – Ian Ferguson Singing on the Steps 5:00 – Indonesian W’p 6:00 – Table Church	19	20 10:00 – Olive Way	21 8:00 – Meditation 9:30 – Pageant Rehearsal 10:00 – Olive Way 12:00 – Community Dinner 5:30 – Meditation 6:30 – Stewart Lodge Carols	22 7:00 – Carols at the Manse	23	Christmas Eve 24 7:00 – Pageant 11:30 – Worship HC
Christmas Day 25 9:30 – Ian Ferguson 5:00 – Indonesian W’p	26	27	28	29	30	31
January 1 9:30 – Ian Ferguson HC 5:00 – Indonesian W’p	2	3	4	5	6 2:30 – Coffee	7