

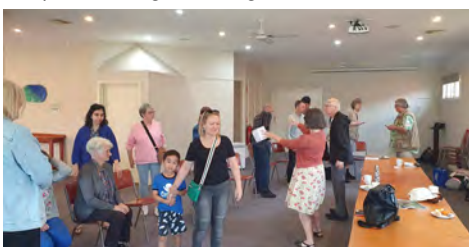
Spring Back into Joy

On a sunny spring day in November a group of about twenty of us ventured to the beach for a day of relaxation and companionship.

We gathered in the welcoming café space of Queenscliff Uniting Church and enjoyed a delicious morning tea with the hero cake being a giant custard-filled Beesting sourced from the local bakery and some mini blueberry muffins made by Maggie.

We then explored the theme of the day by sharing our favourite part of Spring and taking part in a bible reflection and poem writing activity prepared by Ian (*see next page*).

After the reading of the poems from each group, Natalie taught us a joyful song called Bamblela that we sang in three parts, deep, mid-range and high voices.



The same song was taught by Natalie to the whole congregation the following day at church in Brunswick and enjoyed so much that we all sang it again after the service.

The call of the ocean and the sunny day prevailed and we ventured along the street to a grassy spot above the headlands where we settled in for a picnic lunch. We chatted as we watched cargo ships passing by and felt damp ocean mist in the gusty air. Many of us were lucky to try a delicious chicken and potato salad made by Mahshid, as well as our packed lunches, sandwiches or pies from the main street beside the church.

The warm afternoon continued as our group scattered into smaller groups to enjoy the afternoon. Bold swimmers from the Groot family swam out into the waves while others watched from sandy perches. Joyful flower crown makers wove leaves and flowers in amongst conversation while some lingered at the picnic tables to laugh and share. Long walks were taken through tree lined streets and along the golden shores, window shopping was indulged while tongues licked ice cream and savoured the creamy sweetness. Cups of fragrant Food Co-op coffee were sipped in the comfortable arm chairs at Queenscliff Uniting while dedicated letter writers and lively players of 'Dutch Blitz' occupied the tables.

As the afternoon concluded we gathered together once more to participate in a Taize service led by Shawn and Natalie in the chapel, a time of peaceful reflection. Many stayed on after the service to have dinner together. We especially enjoyed sampling a hearty dahl that Mack had made using ingredients from the Food Co-Op.



After a quick pack up we gathered our bathers and flower crowns before turning our heads back towards home and the bright lights of the city.

Thanks to everyone for the many contributions made to make the day so enjoyable, from organisation and planning, giving lifts to others, bringing ribbons for making flower crowns, contributions of food to share and creatively offering poems and voices to our times of reflection and worship.

Thank you especially to the Camp Committee, Maggie Haines, Ian Mack, Saide Cameron, Amelia Ware, Shawn Whelan and Ian Ferguson, and to Queenscliff Uniting Church for the use of their inviting spaces.

Amelia Ware



Springtime Poetry

Inspiration

Song of Songs 2:10-13 - Springtime Rhapsody

My beloved speaks and says to me:

“Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone. [irony!]

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

Invitation

Commentary and a poetry activity provided by Ian Ferguson.

Song of Songs is an erotic love poem which nearly didn't make it into the bible. But in their wisdom the ancient compilers of the bible read its expression of passion between lovers as a metaphor for the love between Creator and Creation - love which awakens like the springtime.

In the land of this song, flowers, turtledoves, figs, vines are signs of new life in springtime. What are the signs of spring “in our land”? What do you see or look for? How might we rewrite this poem to reflect our experience?

Response

Some of the poems produced by small groups:

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.
for now the winter is past,
the rain is coming and going
like a Mexican wave at a footy game.

The bottlebrush are in full bloom;
the time of singing has come,
and the racket of the wattlebirds
is heard in our land.

The hardenbergia puts out its purple flowers,
and the clematis are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

Magnolia heralding
Swans nesting
Tender green shoots bursting
Magpies swooping
Jasmine scent wafting
Bottlebrush brightening
Random seeds sprouting
New life is springing

My beloved speaks and says to me:
“Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the daily rain is warm.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of swooping has come,
and the warble of the magpies
is heard in our land.

The bottle brush bursts into colour,
and the jasmine is in blossom;
the night is thick with their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

