



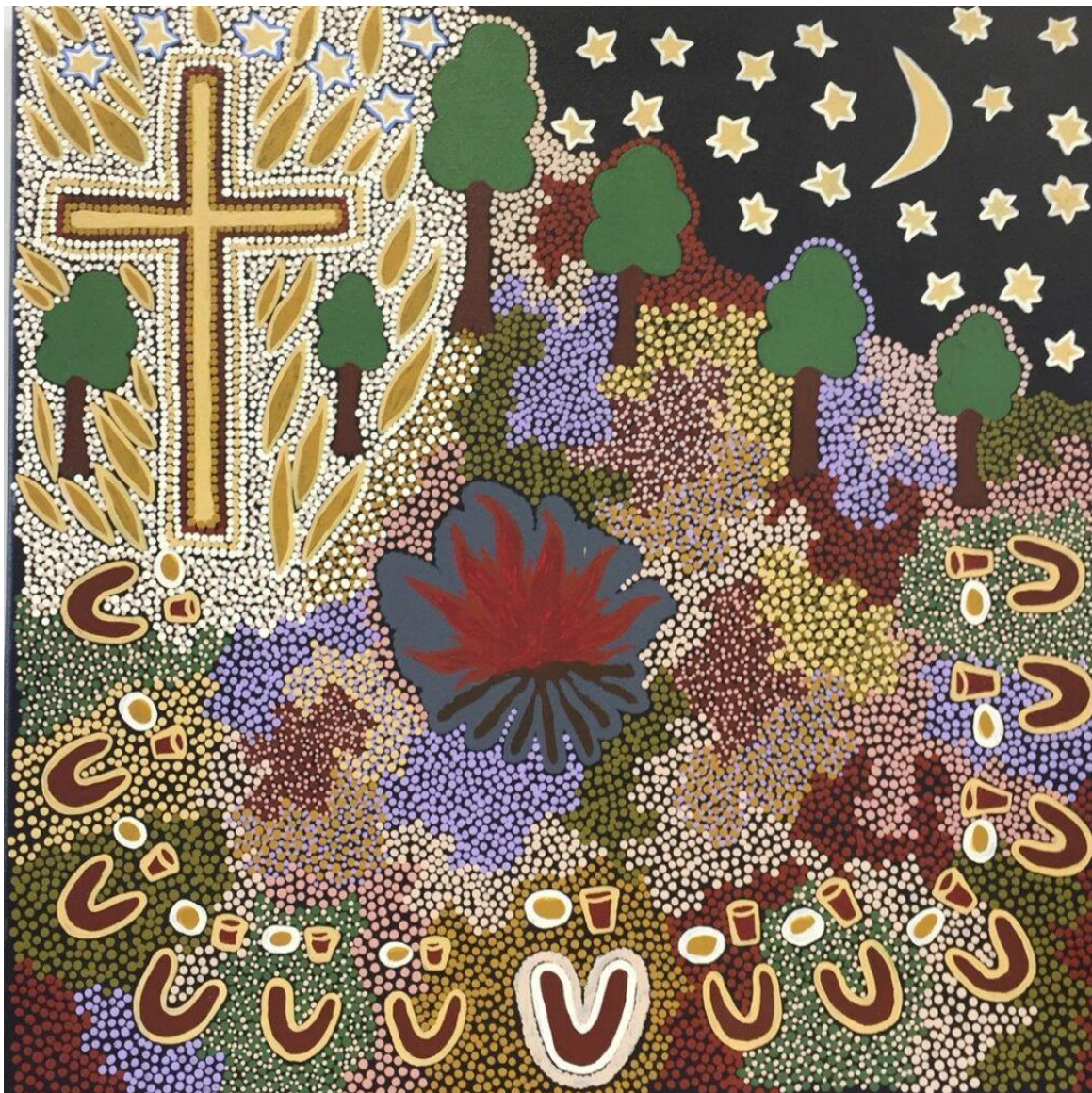
# InSpire



NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 10, no 2

March 2024



**THE LAST SUPPER** (see page 7)

Painting by Anangu artist and interpreter Aunty Lucy Waniwa Lester (1940 – 2021)

[Vale Aunty Lucy – Uniting Church Australia](#)

*InSpiring*

## Minister's Message

**Why does the date of Easter change from year to year but Christmas is always December 25?**



*Stonehenge – perhaps the oldest calendar in the world*

Why have calendars been so important?

OK, the difference of fixed or non-fixed dates for religious celebrations is about a clash of calendars. We in the west are used to a single calendar. In the ancient world there were several different ways of marking the march of the days. We know that Asia and particularly China had an intricate measurement of time. Including the association of the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac in relation to months and years, of the Chinese zodiac. In recent years China, as most of the world have moved to the Gregorian calendar.

The calendar we in the west follow is the Gregorian calendar, set by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. Hence Christmas is always 25 December. Whereas Easter follows the Lunisolar (Julian) calendar and is therefore a moveable feast.

### **The Julian Calendar**

The Julian calendar is a solar calendar of 365 days in every year with an additional leap day every fourth year (without exception). The Julian calendar is still used as a religious calendar in parts of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Julian calendar was proposed in 46 BCE by Julius Caesar, as a reform of the earlier Roman calendar, which was largely a lunisolar one. It took effect on 1 January 45 BC, by his edict. There were 365.25 days in a year. Every four years, leap days are added to achieve this. The Julian calendar stayed the most accurate for more than 1,600 years. Caesar's calendar became the predominant calendar in the Roman Empire and subsequently most of the Western world.

While the Julian Calendar worked pretty well, it wasn't wholly accurate. The calendar assumed that a year had precisely 365.25 days in a year. The Earth takes 365.2422 days to revolve around the sun and that difference of eleven minutes every year was enough to push the calendar out of alignment with the equinoxes by about three days every 400 years.

The drift of the calendar proved a problem for the church. The celebration of Easter was determined by the date of the spring equinox which the church had established fell on March 21. By the sixteenth century, the equinox fell about ten days earlier.

In 1545, work on changing the calendar got underway. The Council of Trent authorized Pope Paul III to adjust the dates so that the spring equinox matched once again the equinox at the time of the First Council of Nicaea in 325. The Nicaean Council also asked for a new way of keeping time to prevent Easter from drifting through the calendar again.

### **Gregorian calendar**

The Gregorian calendar came into effect in October 1582 following the papal bull, (an edict issued by a Pope.) Pope Gregory XIII, with his astronomers revising the calendar

However, Easter remains a moveable feast and does not fall on a fixed date. Instead, the date for

Easter is determined on a lunisolar calendar while Christmas is a fixed date in the Gregorian Calendar and not attached to any rotations of the earth.

Now because Easter falls on the Sunday after the full moon, it can only be celebrated between March 22nd and April 25<sup>th</sup> and cannot move away from these dates. However, in the Eastern Orthodox church, the observance of Easter can occur between April 4 and May 8.

Therefore, Easter is determined by the Julian (Lunisolar) calendar. Christmas is a fixed date in the Gregorian calendar.

Oh, dear this is hard work! Are there any astronomers in the congregation? Please don't ask me where chocolate eggs and bunnies come from!!

Chris Page

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## **Stonnington Community Uniting Church – What Are We Now?**

In seeking a new Minister, we want our potential candidates to understand how we see ourselves and how we practise our faith.

We, the Church Council appointees to the Joint Nominating Committee (JNC), have therefore set out, for your review and comment, what we believe are the important elements of our community, our weekly services, and our religious beliefs. We have also listed some issues on which we would like to hear your views so these may be incorporated in the Mission Study the JNC is to prepare.

### **Our Religious Beliefs**

We see ourselves as being on a spiritual journey.

We follow a progressive Christian theology. Rather than treating the New (or Old) Testament as the literal truth, we seek to understand it as

providing, through a rich vein of metaphor and parable, a deep understanding of Jesus' message. We take account of the cultural and political context in which Jesus lived, in order to apply His message of God's Kingdom on Earth to our very different modern world.

We are more inclined to acknowledge God as a mystery, all pervasive in our lives and throughout the Cosmos, rather than as a remote, interventionist being.

### **Our Church Services**

Our services do have structure but we have long abandoned the traditional church service, with its formal seating and lecture/listen format. Under Rev Greg Crowe's tutelage, we have become accustomed to more interactive services, with seating in-the-round (or otherwise), and more flexibility in the choice of words.

Music remains important in our services, thanks to the Choir and the Ensemble. We have maintained traditional hymn tunes but often use more modern words that better reflect our progressive theology.

### **Our Faith Community**

We regard ourselves as being non-judgmental, sympathetic to social justice causes, and compassionate.

We believe in being a safe place for all people regardless of ethnicity, creed, gender, cultural background, or sexual orientation.

There are strong friendships within our community, and we can look to each other for support. Pastoral care is seen as a high priority in a community of older members.

We warmly welcome visitors and new members.

### **And how do we want to be?**

The Committee seeks your input to the process of developing our Mission Study, so we ask you

to freely express your views on this question on the attached questionnaire and return it to us.

Dick Carter, Lorna Henry, Michael Read, Jan Riches, Alison Tokita

29 February 2024

## How Do We Want to Be?

You can place your written responses in the box located in the Narthex or give them to Jane in the Church Office. Alternatively, you may email your responses to Alison Tokita on [fuyusona57@gmail.com](mailto:fuyusona57@gmail.com), or give them in person to any of the Committee.

We need to receive your responses by **Sunday 10 March at the latest please**, in anticipation of a **congregation General Meeting to discuss the collated results on Sunday 17 March**. Your responses can be anonymous if you wish.

Here are some prompts for your thoughts and comments:

- Do you agree or disagree with the above summary of the important elements of our community?
- What do you value in a minister?
- What do you value in church services?
- What parts of the wider life at SCUC do you enjoy?
- What would you also wish for in our church?
- How do you envisage the future of SCUC?
- Any other comments?

## NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

Another general meeting of the congregation will be held at the conclusion of the regular service on Sunday, 17 March.

The purpose of the general meeting will be to update members of the congregation on progress towards appointing a new minister. By then we will have received and collated your responses to the questionnaire about future directions, and a summary will be shared with the congregation providing a springboard for wider discussion.

The meeting will be attended by one of the Presbytery representatives on the Joint Nominating Committee, Rev Professor Glen O'Brien.

Dick Carter

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## STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT *Joyce Jenkin, Secretary*

At our recent meeting, council decided that in response to an invitation from ASRC, we will participate in their Feast for Freedom again this year. We will hold the feast next Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March as part of our regular monthly lunch by having donation boxes on the food tables.

Dick reported from the Joint Nominating Committee that a questionnaire will be distributed to the congregation to give them an opportunity to have input into the search for a new minister and there will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> March.

The kitchen refurbishment is nearly complete. It was noted that the cost will be slightly higher than hoped but within the approved amount. Council wishes to thank all those who have contributed to funding by contributing to the Special Effort fundraising.

Easter services will be held as usual, the Tenebrae Service and meal will be at 6.30 on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> March, the Good Friday Service will be at 9.30 on 29<sup>th</sup> and the Easter Sunday Service will be 10.30 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

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### **EWING KITCHEN REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

The refurbishment of the Ewing Church kitchen is nearly complete. The builder has returned the site to the Church and virtually all that remains to be done should be completed by our electrician this week. We expect that everything will be ready for our monthly lunch on Sunday 3rd March.

We think that John Eastoe the builder has done an excellent job. We now have an abundance of fully operational cupboards and drawers in place to assist those who labour in the kitchen supporting our fellowship. The Church Council has also taken the opportunity while John and his team were on site to expand the scope of work to cover the repair of cracked plaster in the Margaret McKinnon Room.

The Church Council is most grateful for the generous response by members and friends of the Church to our invitation to support the Special Effort we are undertaking to assist in meeting the costs of the refurbishment of the kitchen. Donations received total \$64,600 to date. This is not far short of the likely final cost of the building works.

We invite any member or friend of the Church yet to make a donation to our Special Effort to give close consideration to doing so.

Peace and blessings,

Alan Sandbach

Co-ordinator, Ewing Kitchen Special Effort

### **SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT**

*Lorna Henry*

In February we offered our suggestions about things we would like to discuss in coming months.

For our main topic, we addressed an article written by Rev. Dr. Michael Jensen, son of the former Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, and himself a theologian and scholar. He asked the question "After Christianity, what might be Australia's Civil Religion?" The following are extracts from this article.

'On occasions such as a citizenship ceremony, on Anzac Day and Australia Day, there is a need to express our national 'heart', but Christianity is no longer the agreed central story of the Australian people: the number of people claiming affiliation is declining, and immigration has brought us large numbers of people of other faiths.

In this changed religious/spiritual landscape, Australians and their governments and institutions have reached for the rites and ceremonies of our First Nations peoples to serve as a civil religion; hence the widespread adoption of the Welcome to/Acknowledgement of Country and smoking ceremonies in the last decade.

A civil religion serves to sanctify a nation, giving it a sense of its legitimate right to exist, and a source of meaning and values. What this means is, you need to have an idea of some transcendent reality, some reference point which is greater than the nation itself, perhaps rooted in a founding myth.

The indigenous practices are serving this purpose at present, and finally recognising indigenous history and culture in our civil religious practice is a small gesture of reconciliation. However, it may be that in the wake of the failed Voice campaign, indigenous people will view these gestures of respect as ringing hollow.

The pressing question for a post-Enlightenment state is: how do you evoke transcendent reality when we live in a 'disenchanted' world?'

There was discussion!

At our next meeting, we will begin by looking at articles on faith and life from Eureka Street and from the ABC's Religion and Ethics websites.

We will meet on Sunday March 17th at 5.00-7.00pm at 5 Vickery St., as usual. Something for the spirit is an open meeting and everyone is most welcome.

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## **LIBRARY NEWS**

***Faye Pattinson***

Our Book Chat in February was postponed because of the renovations taking place in the kitchen. We will now meet on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30 am in the Margaret McKinnon Room.

Here are the last three books shared at our November meeting.

*The Geisha of Gion* by Mineko Iwasaki Celebrated as the most successful geisha of her generation, Mineko Iwasaki was only five years old when she left her parents' home for the world of the geisha. For the next twenty-five years, she would live a life filled with extraordinary professional demands and rich rewards.

*The Running Grave* by Robert Galbraith (aka J. K. Rowling). Private Detective Cormoran Strike is contacted by a worried father whose son, Will, has gone to join a religious cult in the depths of the Norfolk countryside. Cormoran and his partner, Robin, must rescue the man ensnared in the trap of this dangerous cult which necessitates Robin infiltrating the cult.

*Walk the Blue Fields* by Claire Keegan. A short story collection with an unforgettable array of quietly wrenching stories about despair and desire in the timeless world of modern-day Ireland.

As you can see a very varied selection. And more to be shared in March. Please feel free to join the group even if you have not read a book to share.

There is always discussion and laughter and an opportunity to browse the Church library collection if you have not done so before.

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## **AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP**

Our group will meet on Monday, 18th March, in the Margaret McKinnon Room, at 2.00 pm. All are welcome to join us for a chat and a cuppa. It has been suggested that we make this a trimming session to trim some stamps for Sammy. Those who would like to trim while chatting are asked to please bring their scissors!

Jan Riches

## **OPPORTUNITY TABLE**

**Lencie Harding**

Following its success last year, we will continue to operate an Opportunity Table once a month to raise funds for worthy causes.

The first for the year will be on Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup> to follow worship.

Treasurer Jan Riches has agreed to make a donation from sales to the refurbished SCUC kitchen.

Donations of goods will be gratefully accepted. To comply with health regulations, please label all homemade goods with the name of the item, ingredients, date made and name of the cook.

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## **SAMMY STAMP**

**Lencie Harding**

Thank you to the donors of stamps which are trickling in to help refill my Sammy Stamp box. Special thanks are due this month to Desleigh Kent from the JIM Cluster's 'Just Act' volunteers' team for her generous donation.

The following is from Allan Clark's report for the March 2024 issue of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship's magazine *Net Work*:

A new year has commenced and already Sammy's busy helpers are at it again, trimming, sorting and selling the stamps etc. that you generous people out there forward to 44A Seventh Street PARKDALE 3195, for which we sincerely thank you.

As at the first of February, sales had reached about \$1,720 (same week, last year, \$1,657).

No grants have been approved to date.

Provisional total sales for 2023 amounted to \$40,642 plus with interest of \$1,794 totals \$42,436.

A final 2023 report will be prepared when ready.

Allan Clark,  
Convenor

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### A WONDERFUL INNINGS

Murhyl (known as Bette) Cramer, passed away in February aged 100 years. She came close to celebrating her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday on ANZAC Day.

Bette was a member of the Ewing Memorial Evening and then Afternoon Fellowship group until moving to be closer to her daughter.



Bette excelled at craft and for a number of years "Christmas Craft with Bette" was a much anticipated October meeting.

Our Christmas craft included being taught by Bette to make a Christmas angel by folding the pages of a copy of Reader's Digest and then spraying it with gold paint, a Christmas star using beads and beading wire and a chocolate Christmas tree using a plastic wine glass, polystyrene ball, pins and a box of Cadbury's Roses chocolates. A Christmas angel made from brightly coloured Christmas fabrics was a favourite as was a beautiful all Australian Christmas wreath using the nuts from native trees which some of the members sprayed with gold paint.



Thanks to Bette we have additions to our Christmas decorations for years to come together with memories of a very talented lady.

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**The painting on the cover by Aunt Lucy Waniwa Lester** is included in the book *Our Mob, God's Story: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists Share their Faith* (2017).

<https://christobelmattingley.wordpress.com/tag/our-mob-gods-story/>

See also:

[Global Christian Worship - Last Supper \(indigenous Australia painting\) \(tumblr.com\)](#)

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## COMMON THREADS

Our second gathering for the year took place on 22 February. Being not long after Shrove Tuesday, we enjoyed pancakes with jam and cream, vowing to be more stringent for the rest of Lent. Five completed rugs were delivered to KOGO depot at Wondoflex by Dawn, and people took home five more bags of KOGO squares to join up. Thank you to all those beavering away not only joining up, but also knitting, crocheting, sewing and more. We were happy to welcome Maria S to the group and to welcome back Carla, who briefed us about the various charities that the rugs and other goods are distributed to.



Next meeting will be Thursday 28 March, the morning of the evening Tenebrae service. For further information or suggestions, contact Alison Tokita by emailing [fuyusona57@gmail.com](mailto:fuyusona57@gmail.com)

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## COFFEE AND SOUL

**Tuesday 12 March from 2 pm**

**126 Burke Road (opposite Central Park)**

This informal gathering over coffee will continue, but on the second Tuesday this month. We have found that the ambience at this local café is pleasant, either indoors or in the garden at the rear. Please feel free to drop in on Tuesday 12 March from 2 pm for a chat and a catch-up. All welcome, regardless of age, gender, dietary preferences etc. Alison

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## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for your support during the year. Please feel free to send me news items and photos for *InSpire*. We also welcome articles, so if you feel inspired, do write about any topic of interest to you to share with our readers. *Letters to the Editor are also welcome.*

Deadline for the **April 2024** edition of *InSpire* is **Monday, 25th March**. Articles should be emailed to the Editor Alison Tokita at [fuyusona57@gmail.com](mailto:fuyusona57@gmail.com) where possible, or they can be given in person.



## STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH CONTACTS

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### ROSTERS MARCH 2024

#### STEWARDS:

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> Sue McGrath, Michael Williams & Doug Connell  
 Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Kerrie Davies, Peter Grossman Terry Trewavas & Alan Sandbach  
 Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Richard & Sue Nelson, Luke Leembruggen  
 Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Graeme Lord, Jill & Barry Rogers & Alison Tokita  
 Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> – Clare Pilcher & Anne and Michael Read

#### MORNING TEA:

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Barbara Wolstenholme & Jim Mougos  
 Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Joyce Jenkins & Isabelle Roberts  
 Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Bess & Terry Trewavas  
 Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> Easter Sunday

**CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2024**

<b>SUNDAY 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>11 AM</b>	<b>EUCCHARIST &amp; COMMUNITY LUNCH</b>
<b>SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>10.30 AM</b>	<b>CHURCH SERVICE</b>
<b>TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>2.00 PM</b>	<b>COFFEE &amp; SOUL</b>
<b>THURSDAY 14<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>10.30 AM</b>	<b>BOOK CHAT</b>
<b>SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>10.30 AM</b> <b>5.00 PM</b>	<b>CHURCH SERVICE</b> <b>SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT</b>
<b>MONDAY 18<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>2.00 PM</b>	<b>AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP</b>
<b>SUNDAY 24<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>10.30 AM</b>	<b>CHURCH SERVICE</b>
<b>THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>10.00 AM</b> <b>6.30 PM</b>	<b>COMMON THREADS</b> <b>TENEBRAE SERVICE</b>
<b>FRIDAY 29<sup>TH</sup></b>	<b>9.30 AM</b>	<b>GOOD FRIDAY</b>
<b>SUNDAY 31<sup>ST</sup></b>	<b>10.30 AM</b>	<b>EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE</b>