



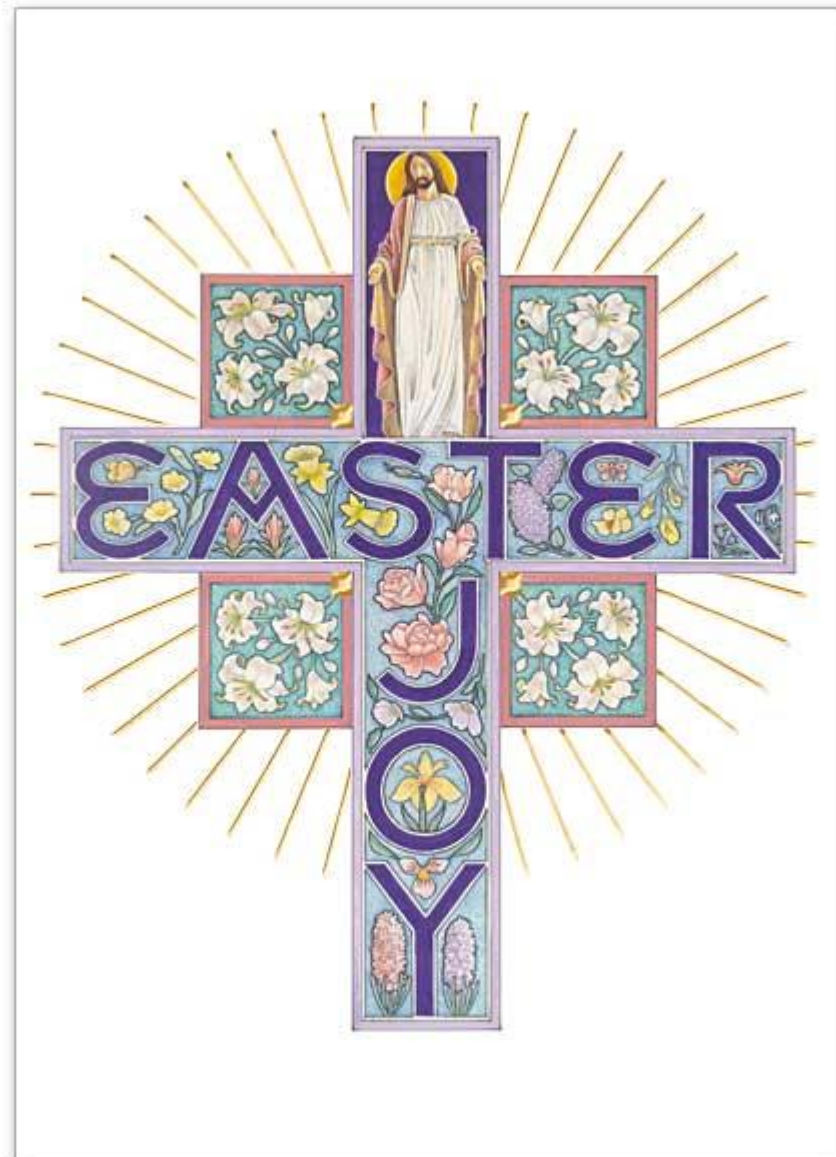
# InSpire



NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 10, no 3

April 2024



*InSpiring*



**Preparing for the Tenebrae meal on Maundy Thursday**



**Good Friday service**

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### **THE SEARCH FOR OUR NEW MINISTER CONGREGATION SURVEY**

This survey was conducted to gather the congregation’s views on important aspects of congregational life to guide the preparation of a Mission Study & a Congregation Profile for use in the Uniting Church’s process of filling the current ministerial vacancy at Stonnington Community UC (SCUC).

The statement “What Are We Now?” and accompanying questionnaire “How Do We Want to Be?” (each are reproduced below) were circulated to the seventy-two email addresses of congregation members & friends who regularly receive information & notifications about the congregation’s life. These documents were also distributed as a handout to those members who attended the service on Sunday 25 February.

#### **The “What Are We Now?” Statement**

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 (Dick Carter, Lorna Henry, Michael Read, Jan Riches,

Alison Tokita) 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 important issues on which we would like to hear your views so these may be incorporated in the Mission Study the JNC is to prepare for submission to Presbytery.

#### **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.

## **The "How Do We Want to Be?" Questionnaire**

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.

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?

## **Responses to the Questionnaire**

Thirty-three responses were returned (46% response rate). This was an excellent & heartening response which indicates the strength of members attachment & commitment to our faith community.

The following is an analysis of the responses to each question.

### *Do You Agree or Disagree With the "What Are We Now" Statement?*

Twenty-five respondents agreed without further comment, three agreed but with thoughtful criticisms re beliefs & one observed that there were varied beliefs across the members. No one disagreed.

### *What do you value in a Minister?*

Pastoral gifts are the most valued quality.  
A progressive/contemporary theologian.  
A team leader.  
A clear communicator in speech & manner of teaching.  
An ability to explain Jesus's message & its applicability today.

### *What do you value in church services?*

Music (but there was a wide range of views on the type of music).  
Participative interaction.  
Not being restricted by conventional forms.  
Being inspired by the experience.  
The "togetherness of community"; "Being with people I trust & respect".

### *What parts of SCUC's Wider Life Do You Enjoy?*

The "extracurricular" activities (Something for the Spirit, First Sunday lunch, Book Chat, Common Threads, the Library, UCAF, coffee chats in a café). This answer was by far the most mentioned of all responses in the survey. The friendship/sense of community/ supportive care for each other. Commitment to social justice issues.

### *What do you wish for in our church?*

There were fewer clear-cut responses to this question, perhaps indicating uncertainty about what may be possible.  
Maintenance of numbers; keep functioning.  
Identify one major opportunity for outreach to the local community.  
More younger people.  
To continue the progressive Christian journey.

### *How do you envisage SCUC's Future?*

This was the less frequently answered question. The tone of the responses may indicate concern & perplexion about the future.  
More of the same/continue what we are doing.  
No future without new members.  
"Who Knows?"

### *Other Comments?*

There were fourteen individual illuminating comments. In addition, there were two unsolicited contributions suggesting we could consider a new structure for our ministry (having separate ministers for various tasks)

### **What Happens Next?**

The JNC will complete the Mission Study & submit it as soon as possible to our Presbytery's Pastoral Relations & Finance & Risk Committees for acceptance. Given these Presbytery Committees' meeting schedules this

acceptance will not be forthcoming until towards the end of May. In the interim, the JNC will start the preparation of the Congregation Profile in anticipation of ultimately receiving clearance from Presbytery.

Dick Carter

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## **STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT**

*Joyce Jenkin, Secretary*

There were a number of issues raised at our March council meeting:

We are considering forming a sub-committee to investigate the cost and best placement of a fountain in the triangular space between the Memorial Garden and the church steps.

It was agreed that we would employ a Church Officer whose duties will include setting up for church and morning tea on Sundays and also for Weddings and Funerals. We will pay a retainer of \$100 per week. We have been lucky enough to have filled the position already, so if you see Martin around, please say hello.

We noted that the recent Feast for Freedom raised \$290 for ASRC.

Over the last few years, we have had to spend a considerable amount of money maintaining our buildings; Dick noted that it has been money well spent as our rent income is critical.

Due to recent events, we are going to upgrade our security at the Ewing Centre by installing rods in the windows, security lights with sensors and a strobe light under the eaves.

Alan reported that the 'Special Effort' to fund the kitchen renovation raised \$64,650; thank you to everyone who contributed.

Our website and Facebook pages need attention, the Facebook page is currently inaccessible so a

new one needs to be set up. This is currently being looked into.

Alison suggested that we could hold some Sunday afternoon forums on topics such as homelessness, the future of Christianity and anti-racism training for members of the congregation and the wider community. We consider this to be a great idea and we will investigate it further.

**Editor:**

In order to revamp the church's website and set up a new Facebook page, we are seeking some outside help. If you know of anyone who could guide us on this matter and set it up so we can manage it ourselves, the Council would be most grateful to hear. If you have any leads, please contact Alan Sandbach, or any member of the Council.

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**SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT**

***Lorna Henry***

March was a time of Lent and the opportunity to reflect about faith and life.

With Lent in mind, we centred our thoughts on an article from Eureka Street by Andrew Hamilton. More exactly, it was a series of articles, because for each week of Lent, he was writing about a quality of life to be aimed for and developed, and not merely in our personal lives, but in society as well.

At the time of our meeting mid-March, he had already written about five qualities. These were: Humility, Community, Generosity, Dignity/Respect, Commonality. This last quality is not easily understood: we took it to mean the practice of coming together and honestly discussing what is best for a community. (An ideal for our parliamentarians.)

In the final week, and after our meeting, the last and most central quality was described: Love. These six qualities are worthy of ongoing reflection.

In April, there will be no Sunday meeting.

However, in lieu of a meeting we have a plan to go as a group to a film at the Balwyn Cinema on

Monday, April 29th, at a time to be decided when further details are published. The film is 'Freud's Last Session', an imaginary meeting between Freud and C S Lewis in London on the eve of World War II.

We hope to have a chance to talk about it immediately afterwards over a light meal. When the film's times are announced, an email will be sent.

And now it is Easter! Wishing you all many blessings and joys at this special time.

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**LIBRARY NEWS**

***Faye Pattinson***

The first Book Chat for the year was held on March 14. A group of enthusiastic readers met to share the books they had been reading over the Christmas holidays. As usual there was a spirited discussion on the books offered.

Some of the books were:

*Emergencies Only* by Amanda Macelland. From nursing in remote Indigenous communities in Australia's Top End to re-building villages after the devastating Boxing Day Tsunami in Aceh, from fighting famine in Sub Saharan Africa to facing kidnapping on the war-torn streets of Mogadishu, from battling cyclone damage in PNG to heading up the Red Cross's West African Ebola response, Amanda has faced huge challenges and collected incredible stories along the way.

*Calling Gippsland Home* by Jim Connolly. The author writes of twelve famous Australians who have called Gippsland home. They range from scientists (Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet) to writers (Mary Grant Bruce) to boxers (Lionel Rose). All have walked the green, green grass of Gippsland

*"Would that be funny? Growing up with John Clarke* by Lorin Clarke. In this fascinating memoir, Lorin Clarke tells the story of growing up with her famous father, her art historian mother

Helen, and her little sister Lucia. Much has been written about John Clarke, but this is the insider's view—of his childhood, his relationship with his parents, his decision to leave New Zealand and live in Australia, and the choices he and Helen made to create a family life that is right out of the box.

*The Second-Time Teacher: Lessons from Afghanistan* by Ian Edwards. Against a backdrop of war, poverty, extreme physical injury, disability and suffering the reader accompanies physiotherapy teacher Ian Edwards on a thirty-year journey of experiences in war devastated Afghanistan and impoverished and remote rural Mexico.

Our next Book Chat will be held on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> May at 10.30 in the Margaret McKinnon Room. All are welcome with or without a book to share.

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### **The World Day of Prayer 2024**

The Leighmoor Uniting Church, Moorabbin prepared their own World Day of Prayer 'Service for Peace' to be conducted on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 10.30am.

On entering the narthex each person was given a copy of the service and a sprig of olive leaves including some with baby green olives attached.

At the commencement of the service the 60 people present were asked to stand for the entry of the McKinnon Secondary College Senior Singers and their pianist/conductor Ms Blanka West.

The service was led by a member of Leighmoor's congregation with members from other local churches participating.

The video shown was called 'War is not a Woman's Game'.

Allan Clark of Sammy Stamp fame was the organist for the hymns which included favourites

'Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You' 'Make Me a Channel of Your Peace' and 'I, the Lord of Sea and Sky'.

For the Passing of the Peace everyone was asked to exchange their sprigs of olive leaves with others seated nearby.

During the Service the McKinnon Secondary College Senior Singers consisting of 14 young women and a male soloist, sang 'I Urge You' and 'Songs of Peace'.

The Offertory Prayer and Blessing were given by Leighmoor's Minister, Rev Heeyoung Lim.

A prayer was offered for Rev Dr Julie Hall and her team at Bentleigh UC who have accepted the role of coordinating the 2025 World Day of Prayer Service, written by the women of the Cook Islands with the theme 'I made you wonderful'.

The Senior Singers concluded the service with Michael Jackson's 'Heal the World'.

A lavish morning tea was enjoyed by all and especially by the students.





Allan Clark at the organ



McKinnon Secondary College Senior Singers

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### AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP

At the Afternoon Fellowship meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March, a group of diligent ladies cheerfully

trimmed a large quantity of stamps for Sammy Stamp.

Afternoon tea was enjoyed once the trimming was complete.

Jan Riches concluded the meeting with a blessing.

I am pleased and grateful to report that there are now 360g of trimmed and sorted stamps ready for delivery to the Sammy Stamp volunteers at Trinity Brighton's hall.

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### OPPORTUNITY TABLE

#### Lencie Harding

On behalf of our Treasurer, Jan Riches, I am delighted to report that the Opportunity Table on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March raised \$261.50 of which a significant amount was raised from the sale of Isabelle Robert's delicious cooking and Michael Williams' delicious jams.

Thank you to Faye Pattinson for donating another copy of her children's book and to everyone who brings and buys.

In response to requests for marmalade, Meyer lemons ripen for marmalade in the winter months.

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### SAMMY STAMP

#### Lencie Harding

Thank you to the members of our congregation for the packets of saved stamps that were donated in February and March. I was delighted to receive so many, including a number of very welcome German and Japanese stamps.

Another generous donation of stamps came from Jenny Bars, Synod's Archivist.

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

The year progresses and so does Sammy Stamp. Up to the 29/2/24, sales had reached about \$3,310 (Same week last year \$3,416).

We have approved two grants so far this year. The first was to: Travellers Aid - \$4,900 to assist in the procurement of powered wheelchairs to support passengers with disabilities and age-related mobility issues, etc. Travellers Aid operates from four service sites: Southern Cross, Flinders Street, Ballarat and Seymour railway stations.

The second was \$5000 to the United Church in the Solomon Islands, to complete the Medical Nurses' building at the Vurago Health Care Centre.

This brings the grants approved so far this year to \$9,900.

Thank you to all you generous people around Victoria, Tasmania and further afield for your generous donations of philatelic items flowing to 44A Seventh Street, Parkdale, 3195

By the way, Sammy is quite pleased to receive postcards as we have people who collect them.

Allan Clark  
Convenor

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**Video message from Kon Karapanagiotidis**

**CEO of Asylum Seekers Resource Centre**

[A message from Kon. \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



He is thanking us and over 500 other groups who hosted a Feast for Freedom.

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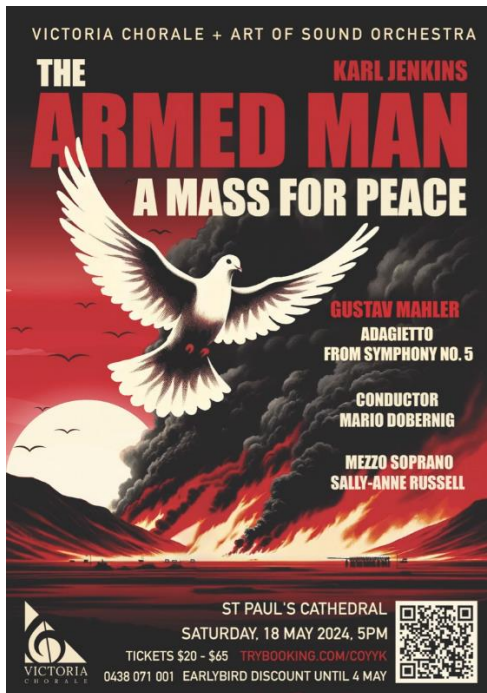
### **Forthcoming piano recital**

The recital by Alan Kogosowski will be held at the church on Sunday April 14, from 2.30. See Margie Mitsikas about bookings.





## A forward notice from Anne Page



The Armed Man was commissioned to mark the end of one of mankind's most destructive millennia, and first performed in the Year 2000, with hopes for a new era of peace. After a decade of Balkans warfare, Welsh composer Karl Jenkins dedicated this thrilling Mass to the victims of the Kosovo violence. Now Victoria Chorale performs The Armed Man in this time of new and dangerous conflict. Exciting, brilliant, varied and passionate, the work is a great kaleidoscope of musical styles. With its rich harmonies and exciting percussive sections, it ends in a rousing song of peace.

Link to the opening section of The Armed Man, L'Homme armé:

<https://youtu.be/njJsHbfY6Vc?si=3IJ6MmHAMzX1LpIJ>

Link to the second last section of the Armed Man, the Benedictus:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zc1Zoz-NUro>

Link to more information about Karl Jenkins:

<http://www.karljenkins.com/biog>

The program will begin with Gustav Mahler's yearning Adagietto, from his Fifth Symphony.

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## COMMON THREADS

At our meeting on Maundy Thursday, we were treated to Hot Cross Buns by Maria – thank you! Carla brought us more bags of KOGO squares to join up. Thank you to all those beavering away joining up, knitting, crocheting, sewing and more.



Faye's own squares joined up by Jo



Dawn's eye-watering result



Anne's lovely work.



This is just one of the five (or more?) rugs that Jo has joined up in the past month She has taken away more bags of squares to keep up her momentum.

These and other blankets, and goods including beanies, have been delivered to KOGO via the pickup point at Wondoflex in Malvern Road.

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### Message from Vicki Davis, CEO of KOGO

Dear Alison,

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the lovely items you have sent us. At KOGO we recognise and deeply appreciate the effort and skill that has gone into making them. We know that the people who receive them will feel cared for and valued in turn.

In the 20 years since we began, we have built relationships with over 375 Community Partner Organisations. These agencies distribute our finished garments and blankets to a myriad of

people undergoing hardship. The homeless, refugees, children at risk, remote indigenous communities, women in refuges and families who are struggling to make ends meet are all recipients of the wonderful items made by the KOGO community.

Again, we deeply appreciate your contribution and thank you for helping us to make the world a warmer place, one stitch at a time.

Kind Regards,

Vicki Davis

E: [info@kogo.org.au](mailto:info@kogo.org.au)

W: [kogo.org.au](http://kogo.org.au)

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### **COFFEE AND SOUL**

**Tuesday 9 April from 2 pm**

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

This informal gathering over coffee continues on the second Tuesday of the month. If it is warm enough the outdoor seats in the garden at the rear are nice and quiet. If it is chilly however there are plenty tables indoors. Place and pay for your order before finding a seat. Please feel free to drop in on Tuesday 9 April from 2 pm for a chat and a catch-up. All welcome, regardless of age, gender, dietary preferences etc. Alison

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