



InSpire



NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 10, no 1

February 2024

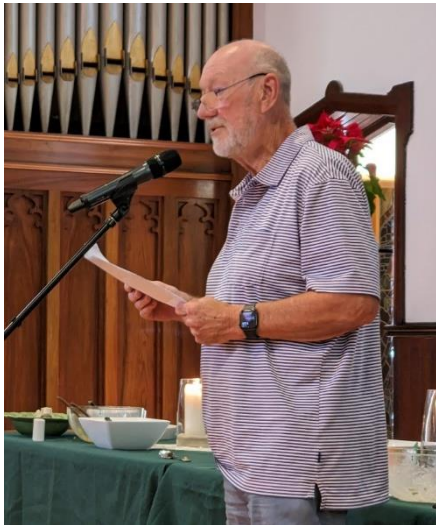


CUTTING OF THE TIES – “PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW...”

InSpiring



The meal and ceremony were attended by over 80 people



Rev David Pargetter



Greg and Dana's farewell speech

RELEASE OF PASTORAL TIES

**Conducted by Presbytery Minister, Rev
Anneke Oppewal**

Sunday 28 January

My brother in Christ, you were called to and inducted into this placement as a Minister of the Word to continue a discernment of what it means to be the church in the 21st Century, to assist the congregation in its "Progressive Christian Journey", to nurture 'Life enhancement 'through listening to and caring for the people in this community.

You have been blessed by sharing in the joys and pain associated with the ministry of the people of God in this congregation. Now after 15 years of rich and fruitful ministry, and a total of 22 years of Ministry in this community, we have come to that time when your relationship with these people as Minister and Pastor formally ends.

Also, as a colleague who has encountered you in many different places up and down the synod since I met you first when I was minister at Toorak Uniting Church and you were one of a small group of colleagues that met together regularly to share their thoughts and concerns with each other and explore ways of working together. I had just arrived in Australia and that little group was very much a life line for me at the time that helped

me find my way into the Uniting Church. Later we connected again as members of the progressive network and in various Presbytery and Synod settings. More recently I worked with you as Presbytery Minister over last four years in PPE. I'd like to name here, with gratitude, to the mountain of stuff you've been part of and contributed to in the Presbytery, your faithfulness and willingness to stick at it and be honest - often as the prophetic voice - even if it meant you'd find yourself standing alone or considered a pain in the backside by some. Your care for colleagues up and down the presbytery and outside it and your care for me personally has been exceptional and I, as well as others, will miss that genuine care and support. I knew I could turn to you as someone who has seen the good, the bad and the ugly of Church, able to be a listening ear, give good advice and be honest with me where I might not see my own failings. I would also like to name here your significant contribution to the wider Church during this time that has been significant and awe inspiring (that's speaking for me and from my perspective)

Anneke addresses the Congregation:

Members and friends of the congregation, today we have expressed gratitude to God for Greg's life and work amongst us; we recognize the alteration of our relationship, both corporately and individually; and we release him for the new role to which he has been called in Queenscliff Point Lonsdale.

Do you, the members and friends of this church, release Greg from his duties as Minister of Stonnington Community Uniting Church?

All: We do, in the peace of Christ

Presbytery Minister:

Do you, Greg, release this community of faith from its attachment to you as their minister and do you release its members individually from depending upon you to provide the pastoral ministries they may seek?

Minister: I do, in the peace of Christ

Prayer of Release - Anneke

*We are aware that our lives are ongoing,
uncertain of the journey that lies ahead.
A journey that will include flux and change, many
endings and beginnings.
In silence we seek for a gentle hope...
A hope that sustains us in our fears and anxieties
A hope that reminds us there is a light in the
darkness
Clear paths beyond confusion
New life that emerges from death
And a bond of love that cannot separate us from
the love of God that is ours in Christ.*

FAREWELL TO GREG & DANA CROWE

From Dick Carter's farewell address at
the Celebration of the Crowes' ministry.

The time has come for us to say "farewell" to Greg and Dana. I, and I dare say, all present have not been looking forward to the conclusion of the "era of Greg" at what is now Stonnington Community UC.



Dick's speech and presentation of farewell gift

This "era of Greg" has been quite unusual by many standards. First, it is almost unheard of in the Uniting Church for a congregation to recall a minister who had previously been in placement with that congregation as we did. On top of that, at the conclusion of ten years in his second placement it was extended for up to five further years. It is because the end of that extension period has drawn near that Greg is now moving on.

Making the decision in 2009 to recall Greg to ministry here was something the Joint Nominating Committee at the time wrestled with for quite a while. We were conscious that we had moved on during the seven years since Greg had left us to serve as the Chaplain at the Juvenile Justice Centre. We expected that he had moved on too so it would not just be a simple matter of taking up the reins where we left off in 2003. In the final event, we now know that the decision has been very beneficial to the congregation and, I think, to Greg too.

Greg has had an enormous effect on shaping the congregation to the form it takes today. During his first period at Ewing Memorial Uniting Church, he invited us to consider other ways of being Christian rather than simply following the traditional orthodoxy of the UCA. This led us intentionally to search for a minister with progressive Christian leanings to take us further

on our progressive journey. We were fortunate to find Rev John Smith who did just that in the five years he was our minister.

On Greg's return to us he continued his efforts at reform and not just with our congregation. Early in the piece Ewing was at the centre of an attempt to get the five Uniting Church congregations in the Stonnington area to collaborate more closely with each other. Greg invested a great deal of emotional energy into this effort & he was bitterly disappointed when it came to naught. In the ultimate, the attempt did bear some fruit and the effort of amalgamating the Malvern East and Ewing congregations in 2015 to form Stonnington Community Uniting Church was certainly eased by it.

Greg's own progressive Christian development has also continued and that process has been aided by two visits to the United States. This has been of great benefit to us as we have accompanied him on this journey too. We now are confident to proclaim our progressive Christian convictions which is reflected in our theology, the less formal approach to our services and in other ways.

Another of Greg's strengths is the pastoral care and support he has given us. He has also shared this Christian practice in the wider community, particularly with people who are grieving. I suspect that it is his loving care which will be the thing that many of us will miss.

He has also faithfully served the wider church in many ways. He was for several years Chair of what was then Synod's Commission for Mission, served on Presbytery committees, and has had a close and continuing relationship with the Victorian division of the UC Aboriginal & Islander Congress. Sadly, some of his efforts in the wider church have not always been appreciated in the way they deserved to be.

We are about to receive a considerable shock when we find out how much unheralded effort Greg has put in behind the scenes which we will

now have to do ourselves. Setting up the church for services, funerals, lunches, working the audio/visual set up we have, & much more. He and Dana have actually set up today's celebration. When we protested that it shouldn't be his job to organise his own farewell he replied, "I will do it one last time as part of my parting thanks and blessing the space". He did add that we can handle the cleaning up though!

Greg is one half of a great duo. He has been lovingly supported by Dana who herself has quietly done much work for the congregation without drawing attention to herself. Her work in the church garden has been wonderful and so has the rehabilitation of the manse garden. All this she has done without being asked and having no expectation of applause. The "bears exhibitions" she curated in the church narthex during the COVID lock down periods brought joy to many including in the neighbouring community. Dana we will miss your friendship very sorely.

Farewell Greg and Dana! You will always be welcome among us when opportunities arise, and we will continue to carry you in our hearts while life and breath lasts.

Dick Carter

Ed. I neglected to include this warm and inspiring message from Rev Dr Christopher Page, heralding his interim ministry with us. My sincere apologies!

THE IN-BETWEEN TIMES

Dear friends, I am looking forward to our ministry together for the next few months. Last Sunday's farewell lunch for Greg and Dana was delightful "...parting is such sweet sorrow." A mingling of joy and sorrow. Joy because of the relationships that have been nurtured over years with Greg, Dana and family and their strong and valued presence in the SCUC congregation. Yes, but also grief at

saying goodbye to those who have become friends.

In the next few months together, my hope is that our friendship will grow. It is said that a friend will tell when you have dirt on your face! And for no other reason than that they care for you. There is a marvellous freedom between true friends. Those who listen to understand us rather than planning the next words that they will say.

Supply ministry has some interesting dynamics and tensions. It is essentially and "in between time." There is the need to honour the past journey of the congregation, while offering some new insights. It is continuously looking ahead to the future and the end for the "in-between minister".

Many years ago, I filled in at the church of a good friend. I had returned from Canada for a visit to family in Australia. It became three months while my friend took his long service leave asking me to minister in his church. During our discussion about what my role would be for a three month period, I came to the conclusion that it was for me to do a good job within his community and to encourage the congregation to be enthusiastic and excited about his return.

Of course, in this supply at SCUC, the future minister and ministry is unknown. We have to deal with uncertainty, insecurity, in-between time, and that old friend "waiting." Surprisingly, waiting is not a time of inactivity; it a season of internal and external action. True waiting is a time of reflection, faith and hopefulness [sic]. The famous mythologist Joseph Campbell suggested in these times of waiting, "We must let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the one that is waiting for us."

And the best people to wait with are friends.

Christopher

SUPPLY MINISTRY

Our congregation member, Rev Dr Christopher Page, has agreed to provide supply ministry to us during the period until we call a new minister to fill our ministry vacancy.

Basically, Chris will take a “business as usual” approach so the style of service we have developed will continue including the musical arrangements with Cheryl Jenkins, Colin Jenkins (plus Choir), Errol Fernando leading in the accustomed weekly order & the Ensemble performing on the first Sunday each month.

Specifically, Chris has agreed to:

- Provide ministry for fifteen hours per week (i.e. a 0.4 placement) beginning on 1 February.
- Initially the supply period will be three months and, subject to review, will then continue.
- Lead most Sunday services. There will be times when a service will be led by a minister providing occasional supply or by a member(s) of the congregation.
- Service times will remain unchanged – commencing at 11.00am for the first Sunday of the month (followed by lunch) and 10.30am for the other Sundays.
- Provide pastoral care, with some home visitation but prioritising those in hospital and other crises.
- Be an invited member of the Church Council.

It will be necessary for us to arrange operation of the church audio/visual system for services and setting up the church seating each Sunday and the hall for morning teas and lunches. A roster of volunteers to carry out these tasks will be established. If you are willing to assist in this way please let Dick Carter know.

We are very grateful to Rev Dr Chris for agreeing to take on this role and we look forward to his ministry among us. Dick Carter

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

A general meeting of the congregation will be held at the conclusion of the regular service on Sunday, 11 February.

The purpose of the general meeting will be to provide information to members of the congregation on progress towards appointing a long term new minister and to answer questions about the appointment process, particularly the operation of the Joint Nominating Committee and the roles of other Councils of the UCA (Presbytery and Synod’s Placement Committee). There will be an opportunity for members to give feedback to the Church Council if they wish which can be fed into the process of selecting the new minister.

Dick Carter

APPOINTMENT OF A JOINT NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A critical part of the UCA process of selecting and calling a new minister to a congregation is the appointment of a Joint Nominating Committee which has the task of leading the selection process. This committee is made up of individuals appointed by Presbytery (which also appoints the committee chairperson) and the Church Council of the congregation.

A Joint Nomination Committee (JNC) has been appointed to select a new minister to fill our ministerial vacancy. The members of this JNC are:

Presbytery appointees:

Rev Dr Julie Hall (Chairperson)

Rev Professor Glen O’Brien

Church Council appointees –

Dick Carter
Lorna Henry
Michael Read
Jan Riches
Dr Alison Tokita

Rev Dr Julie is the Minister at Bentleigh UC & will be known to those SCUC folk who are members of the Progressive Christian Network. Rev Professor Glen is a UC Minister & a Professor at the Melbourne University of Divinity.

The JNC has yet to hold its first meeting but will do so shortly now that the Presbytery representatives have returned from their pre-arranged periods of annual leave. Dick Carter

UCA Day of Mourning

Rev Dr Coralie Ling



We were most grateful to have the Rev Coralie Ling conduct worship for us on January 14 and 21. She marked the Sunday preceding Australia Day as a Day of Mourning, as recommended by the Uniting Church. Her Gathering Words were: We gather to thank God for this beautiful country and to lament where in our history we have been destructive of its beauty and its peoples.

Coralie kindly agreed to have her sermon printed in *InSpire*.

Mark 1:14 – 20 Day of Mourning

Today in our reading for the third Sunday of Epiphany we come to Mark's gospel – the gospel set for this year (along with John's gospel). In the reading we meet Jesus as he begins ministry with a preaching summary of what he is about. Up to this point in Mark's gospel Jesus has been in the desert – a place of spirituality as he seeks what his ministry will be.

Now he is in the busy world and he begins by saying "now is the time", "the Kingdom of God is at hand".

Back in the first century Jesus would live out the reign of God, creating communities of friends and disciples, loving and attending to the needs of the people speaking words of truth and justice, active with integrity.

Now in the 21st century, 2024, the reign of God is at hand too. How will we live it out?

The Day of Mourning service prepared for UCA congregations has this Word of Mission: "People of God, be strong and of good courage, live as people of the covenant, seek justice and resist evil, honour First Nations Peoples and confront racism, love and care for creation and turn from exploitation of the earth, proclaim truth and challenge lies, until we are reconciled through God's love."

Jesus' words after "now is the time, the reign of God is at hand" are "repent and believe the good news", or "change your hearts and minds, believe this good news."

Now is the time – and immediately following this, Peter and Andrew, then James and John leave their work and begin walking the way of Jesus. We know from later stories they didn't always stick to the way and at Jesus' death the male disciples fled while the women followers of Jesus stayed nearby. Later the women were overcome with fear by they did pass on the message of Jesus. Jesus' friends and disciples all learnt forgiveness and new beginnings on the way of God.

The new covenant God has made is the promise to be with us on the way – our response is to walk that way and on this day of mourning to learn forgiveness. Where we have gone away from God's good creation, where we second peoples (non-indigenous) in this land have been part of harm inflicted on aboriginal people – maybe not deliberately. So many of us have not lived with or got to know first nations people, have not seen the suffering of children taken from their parents, the loss of land and language.

Now the Uniting Church seeks to redress some of these past wrongs – has new language projects and training in the Northern Territory, as for the last 30 years a covenant with the aboriginal congress as part of the UCA governance and seeking justice and truth telling.

In our city living here, we can be part of the truth telling so much needed – changing our hearts and minds from prejudiced / absent history we might have learned in the past, calling for more care of our beautiful country with such a long history. With the referendum on the Voice in the Constitution lost, we can still be finding ways to listen for First Nations people.

My city of Port Phillip has sponsored a multifaith service of mourning run by Boon Wurrung people. The City of Stonnington is sponsoring a healing ceremony with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation (Malvern Cricket Ground 11.45, January 26). These ceremonies enable us to listen to First Nations people in our area and through the UCA there are ways to listen in our church.

The time is now. To change our hearts and minds and walk the way of God.

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Coralie invited us to comment on her sermon, and several people did so. This inspired a letter to the editor (see page 12), and I hope it will lead to further such contributions in the future. Ed.

Ed: I neglected to print this piece last year. My apologies, Rayna. It was lovely to see you at the Cutting of Ties ceremony. Jenny Turnbull died in November 2022.

A REFLECTION ABOUT JENNY TURNBULL

Rayna Brown

Jenny will always be an important person in my life. An inspiration. I have made many friends in

the Stonnington Community Uniting Church congregation but Jenny was unique. I hope I can explain why.

Jenny was a woman who endeared herself to anyone who stopped for a chat. Jenny was intelligent and loved hearing about my life. I quickly discovered over coffee that Jenny loved footie and barracked for Essendon. I don't know whether this was because she loved red tones or for some other reason. She watched the bombers and generally loved watching football. I would talk about the recent AFL games and Jenny would laugh and smile depending on whether she liked the results (or not). Jenny had a great sense of humour and I always knew how she felt about Melbourne's performance.

When you chatted with Jenny her eyes and her hand would communicate with you. We always held hands. She would squeeze my hand when we were chatting. I discovered Jenny loved gardens and flowers, especially red ones. She was delighted when I bought her a poinsettia. Jenny loved looking at photos of my garden and grandchildren. I didn't let a captive audience get away! During the covid lockdowns I used to write to Jenny. She told me how much she loved my cards. When we moved to Sydney, I sent her photo cards. Regretfully I didn't do this frequently enough.

Of course, it was difficult having a conversation with Jenny. On some days the quality of her speech could make it very hard. Some days she was easy to understand; other days not so easy. Jenny never lost patience with me no matter how many times I asked her to repeat herself. Sometimes we would laugh in exasperation. When this happened Jenny NEVER got annoyed with me. She would squeeze my hand to make me feel better and we would just sit quietly. Some people don't need to talk to express their feelings.

Jenny took great pride in her appearance and loved it when I commented on her nail polish. As time passed and I got to know Jenny better, I

realized she appreciated me talking about all manner of things. Not just the normal social chit chat.

Jenny was extraordinary. She had a patience and understanding that I truly admired and an attitude to life and suffering that can teach us all.

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Joyce Jenkin, Secretary

Council is not due to meet again until 21st February.

In the interim some council members have been busy with the planning of the kitchen renovation which will commence on 5th February and will take two weeks to complete if all goes according to plan. This means that there will be no morning tea after church on Sunday, 11th February.

We are sad to say farewell to Dana and Greg and wish them well for their new life in Queenscliff. As we look to the future, we welcome Rev. Dr. Chris Page as our supply minister and look forward to his leadership over the coming months.

EWING KITCHEN REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

There is much wisdom in the saying "If you can organise your kitchen, you can organise your life." Kitchens are at the heart of much family activity - and Church activity too! As the Rev Greg so movingly explained at his farewell lunch last Sunday, companionship – cum panis (with bread) – is central to the Christian story.

Those who planned and built the Ewing Church kitchen (in 1981) did a wonderful job. The kitchen's use has greatly supported our fellowship ever since. Occasions such as the annual Tenebrae service, weekly morning teas,

monthly lunches and special occasions such as Greg and Dana's recent farewell come readily to mind. The kitchen is central to the church hall and has also facilitated our church's outreach to the wider community, whether it be for concerts, talks or as a regular meeting place for other groups outside the congregation.

However, although over the years appliances and services have been replaced as they have worn out, the fabric of the facility is as installed in 1981. Our kitchen is now very much in need of refurbishment.

The Church Council has decided to renovate the kitchen and has engaged John Eastoe builder to carry out the work. The builder's plans are currently on display on the noticeboard on the north wall of the Church Hall.

The Church Council has also decided to undertake a "Special Effort" to raise funds to defray the cost of the renovation works. We invite all members and friends of the Church to support the Special Effort with a one-off donation to assist meet these costs.

Peace and blessings

Alan Sandbach
Co-ordinator, Ewing Kitchen Special Effort

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT *Lorna Henry*

Another year for SFTS and our first meeting will be on Sunday February 18th.

Firstly, this will be a time to talk about our plans for this year and receive your suggestions for topics to explore and discuss. Please give this some thought.

Then, we will look at an article about the possibility of a 'civil religion' (!) in Australia. The Jesuit publication Eureka Street offers a

challenging article on the topic. The author is Rev. Michael Jensen (son of the former Anglican Archbishop of Sydney). He doesn't seem to mean a personal religion, but a national one. He writes his introduction as follows:

In an age of declining adherence to the Christian faith, has Australia found a new civil religion? And will it serve us well? As an Anglican minister and theologian, it seems to me that this question about what you might call the 'soul' of Australia hasn't been far from the surface in recent debates — especially following the Queen's death in 2022 and during the fractious Voice Referendum. But because in contrast to the US, we in Australia 'don't do God', we rarely acknowledge the religious dimension of our national identity.

The article is entitled "After Christianity, what might be Australia's civil religion?"

First question, is there such a thing as a civil religion? Then, if so, what might it be? Jensen offers a plausible possibility.

Our meeting will be on Sunday February 18th, 5.00-7.00pm at 5 Vickery St, East Malvern. As always, anyone and everyone is welcome. (Please contact Lorna beforehand if you would like more information. 0425 755 807).

Finally, farewell to Greg. Thank you for all your input to and support of SFTS over the years, and peace, blessings and every good wish to you and Dana for your new beginnings at Queenscliff-Point Lonsdale.

LIBRARY NEWS

Faye Pattinson

Happy New Year wishes to all our readers! Here's to another year sharing the books we have read – or just listening to what others have read.

Our first Book Chat for the year was to have been on Thursday 8th February, but as the refurbishing of the Church kitchen will take place in February, I have transferred the date to Thursday, 14th

March at 10.30 am in the usual place, the Margaret McKinnon Room. Until then – keep reading!

At the last Book Chat for the year in November, some of the books shared were:

The Christmas Book Club by Sarah Morgan. At the Maple Sugar Inn in snowy Vermont, owner Hattie Coleman specialises in making her guests' dreams come true. But this Christmas, her only dream is making it through the festive season. Then Erica, Claudia and Anna check in for their annual book club holiday

Note: In Australia title of this book is *The Book Club Hotel!*

Don't let her see me cry by Helen Barnacle. This is the gutsy true story of a woman's remarkable journey from a hopeless young heroin addict facing a prison sentence with a newborn baby to a successful psychologist and mother and best friend to Ali - the daughter who gave her the courage and determination to survive.

Stone Yard Devotional by Charlotte Wood. A deeply moving novel about forgiveness, grief, and what it means to be 'good' in which a woman abandons her city life and marriage to return to the place of her childhood, holing up in a small religious community hidden away on the stark plains of the Monaro. (NSW)

Apeirogon by Colum McCann. Based on the true-life friendship of two men whose daughters were killed in the Middle East, this novel buoys the heart. (Note: The title is taken from the mathematical term for an object of an "observably infinite number of sides".) Rami and Bassam live in the city of Jerusalem – but exist worlds apart and yet have one thing in common. Both are fathers – and both daughters are now lost.

There will surely be many more to share in March when everybody will have been reading over the Festive Season and into the New Year!

Reminder: anyone is welcome to peruse the library in the Margaret McKinnon Room and borrow a book, recording your name in the borrowing book at the bottom of the cabinet.

AFTERNOON FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Lencie Harding

Treasurer, Jan Riches, has confirmed that the following Uniting Church agencies and other worthy causes were supported from Afternoon Fellowship funds and Opportunity Table sales during 2023. The total donated was \$2,450.

Act for Peace (Christmas Bowl) \$100
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre \$250
Frontier Services (to support the work of the Bush Chaplains) \$500
Indigenous Hospitality House \$500
Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) \$400
Uniting (Uniting Prahran's Winter Breakfast Programme) \$300
Uniting (Christmas Gifts for Families Programme) \$200
UnitingWorld \$200

This year we will continue to operate an Opportunity Table during morning tea to follow worship. The first will be on Sunday 17th March.

SAMMY STAMP

Lencie Harding

A delivery of 460g of trimmed and sorted stamps was made to the Sammy Stamp volunteers in December 2023. The delivery also included a very special donation of twenty annual volumes of Australia Post's 'Collection of Australian Stamps'. Each volume describes the stamp designs released for the year and includes a set of mint stamps. They were generously donated by Alison and Keith Head. (Alison volunteers

each Thursday at the Synod Archives in Serrell Street, Malvern East.)

Thank you to the members of our congregation who have generously supported the Sammy Stamp Ministry during 2023.

SAMMY STAMP ACHIEVES AGAIN IN 2023!

Due to the continued support of church, community groups, individuals and businesses in Victoria, Tasmania and Australia, another pleasing result was achieved.

- Sales to 21/12/23 have reached about \$40,216 (\$47,690 same period last year) bringing total sales since 1977 to about \$1,147,001).
- A couple of our sales outlets have ceased or reduced causing the drop in sales this year.

Thanks to the helpers from our pool of approx. 21 volunteers, with particular thanks to Ian and Margaret Beaumont, Leon Pederick, Richard Hicks and Rob Turner with the trimming, sorting and selling etc.

A big thank you to John Black and the folk of Trinity Uniting Church, Brighton for their continuing support by allowing us to use their facilities free of charge.

Below is a list of grants approved during 2023. Total \$38,500 – Last year - \$49,200

- Turkiye/Syria Earthquake Appeal
\$5,000
- Vanuatu Cyclones and Earthquake Appeal
\$4,000
- Vanuatu Prevention of Blindness Project
\$2,000
- Mission Liaison Group – to assist in transporting charitable goods to our

Pacific neighbours

\$5,000

- Alice Springs UC – to employ a cleaner to help support her family
\$5,000
- Mercy Works – to help support refugees from West Papua in a very remote area of Papua-New Guinea
\$5,000
- Frontier Services – supporting Bush Chaplains in outback Australia
\$5,000
- Kondanani Zambia – support drug & alcohol program and biomass use for cooking/heating in lieu of tree felling & burning
\$2,500

Uniting Vic.Tas (2023 Christmas Appeal)
\$5,000

TOTAL \$38,500

TOTAL OF GRANTS SINCE 1977: \$1,158,393

Allan J Clark, Convenor (03) 9557 1008

Letter to the Editor

The UCA Day of Mourning

What a pity the UCA chose this label to attach to Australia Day. What a pity to espouse two issues without balance.

I am not in any way criticising those who spoke last Sunday. They were merely following UCA's suggested lead.

Concerning the environment, clearly in the past and even at the present, we the current generation have and are still defacing our beautiful country. But to the credit of this generation, great effort has been and is being directed to improving this environment. More can be done, but don't discount the great progress made to date.

The environment is not dead and need not be mourned.

Concerning the treatment of indigenous people, again balance is required. Our generation is not in any way responsible for some appalling behaviour committed by some of our forebears.

Our generation has been responsible for some wonderful steps forward for the indigenous people.

One of our closest friends, who subsequently achieved high legal office, in the 1960's was a patrol officer in the NT. He was tasked with visiting remote aboriginal communities and recommending the removal, for their own benefit, of young boys and girls then being abused in their own communities. He is proud of what he achieved and so should we.

We should note a number of other efforts made to improve the lives of indigenous people have failed, for a number of reasons, not all due to the actions of the white man.

Also, governments, merely because they are governments, are destined from time to time to fail in pursuing projects. We just need to ride out rough passages and look for better answers.

We can, as happened last Sunday, dwell on the negatives of the relationships between "black" and "white" and skip the positives. Bring balance back into the picture.

The aboriginal race is not dead and need not be mourned.

I attend church seeking leadership and inspiration and to leave enlightened, not saddened.

Richard Nelson

COMMON THREADS

We pre-empted the usual start time for the new year by having our first gathering on Thursday 25 January. Those of us who had taken advantage of the relatively mild summer brought a total of twelve joined up rugs, which have been taken to KOGO for early distribution ahead of winter.

We enjoyed playing with the layout of some blanket kits together.



Ready for assembling!

Next meeting will be Thursday 22 February in the Margaret McKinnon Room. For further information or suggestions, contact Alison Tokita by emailing

fuyusona57@gmail.com

COFFEE AND SOUL

126 Burke Road (opposite Central Park)

A couple of gatherings at this local café were trialled in January, and those who came were enthusiastic to convene it again. Please feel free to drop in on Tuesday 20 February from 2 pm for an informal catch-up. All welcome, regardless of age, gender, dietary preferences etc. Alison

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 **March 2024** edition of *InSpire* is **Monday, 26th February**. Articles should be emailed to the Editor Alison Tokita at fuyusona57@gmail.com where possible, or they can be given in person.

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CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2024

SUNDAY 4TH	11 AM	EUCCHARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH
SUNDAY 11TH	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE
SUNDAY 18TH	10.30 AM 5.00 PM	CHURCH SERVICE SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT
TUESDAY 20TH	2.00 PM	COFFEE & SOUL @ 126 Burke Rd
THURSDAY 22ND	10.00 AM	COMMON THREADS
SUNDAY 25TH	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE

ROSTERS FEBRUARY 2024

STEWARDS:

- Sunday 4th Heather Carter & Doug Connell
- Sunday 11th Kerrie Davies, Peter Grossman Terry Trewavas & Alan Sandbach
- Sunday 18th Richard & Sue Nelson, Luke Leembruggen
- Sunday 25th Graeme Lord, Jill & Barry Rogers & Alison Tokita

MORNING TEA:

- Sunday 11th No morning tea
- Sunday 18th Anne & Michael Read
- Sunday 25th Sue McGrath & Michael Williams