InSpire

NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 11, no 4 **May 2025**

Loneliness and Connectedness *(see page 11)*

InSpiring

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

A Good Friday Reflection

18 April 2025

"On this day we look at the cross, and we remember…"

On this day we look at the cross, and remember…

Softly as the leaves begin to turn and fall,
The days grow shorter, ever clearer and even more barren.

We are surrounded by little deaths,
the drying of the grass
and shrivelling of the flowers,
the loss of the sunlight.
And so, we gather our lives in, like the harvest.

Our friendships, our experiences, our success and our disappointments,
We wrap them around ourselves,
against the cold which is to come.
For in this time, our lives will be lived from within.

Like the grapes that are harvested in happy sunlight,
turning to wine in dark cellars,
so, our thoughts, transform and grow richer when held within this dark space.

Come, Spirit of Mystery,
Come to the centre of our containment.
And grow treasure within us.

On this day we look at the cross, and remember…

The betrayal of friendship and its consequences,
the casual cruelty of Roman authority and execution,
how unreliable others can be in a crisis.

On this day may we remember…
that bigotry, dishonesty, cruelty and unreliability are still a part of our everyday lives.

However, also on this day, may we learn new ways of living…
We cannot avoid suffering, nor close your eyes to suffering around us.
Nor can we be untruthful for the sake of personal interest, or to impress others;
Nor live with harm toward or the earth.

On this day we look at the cross, and we remember…

Today we remember the man Jesus, utterly convinced of the connection between human loving and living in God.

Determined to give people their own authority in their relationship with God. To set people free from the fear of the unknown.

He set his heart on breaking down barriers between us and the sacred, between God and the earth.

We are grateful today for the ways in which his life, his teaching, and his death, set us free.

We are given a glimpse of another reality – a new way of being. A vision worth exploring.

Because of him we are encouraged to celebrate life, to suck the marrow from existence, to explore, and probe;
to venture into unchartered seas, without fear of God, or of the unknown.

He puts no limit on our experience of life, nor anything in all creation. In this death, we find the seeds of new life.

On this day we look at the cross, and we remember…

Today we follow the path of descent:
In Jesus everything holds together around this centre.

He let go, emptied himself, and surrendered to God.
Letting go of self-will, - of wilfulness. Willing to descend, taking the lower place.

In the garden of Gethsemane, while betrayers and accusers massed at the gate, he struggled in anguish. Yet remained true to his course. Not clinging even to life itself. Let it go…

Not my will, but yours be done,

Losing himself, even squandering himself. Nothing to be renounced or resisted. Clinging to *no thing*. And yet…Embracing everything.

Jesus, the model of life lived with willingness and yet abundance.

Your will be done

We also let go. Clinging to *no thing*, holding to *no thing*. *A condition of complete simplicity (Costing not less than everything)*

*F*ollowing Christ in this self-abandonment. Following his example of willing surrender…

The abundant life promised in Christ does not come from grasping but from releasing, letting go. Not so much from striving, but more from relinquishing. Not only from taking, but often by giving.

O Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Surrender – letting go bringing a glimpse of freedom. Surrender, not weakness or failure.

For the bird to fly it must surrender to the wind.
For the swimmer to swim it must surrender to the water.
For the surfer to ride the wave he must surrender to the wave.

For us to be fully alive, we must surrender to the cross of suffering.

On this day we look at the cross, and we remember…

Adapted from the writings of Robert Funk, Trisha Watts, M Dobson, M Morwood and Thich Nhat Hanh

The Lord's Prayer Matthew 6:10

Philippians 2:5–11

Adapted from "Surrender" Tuesday, April 15, 2025 by Cynthia Bourgeault

Christopher

CAFÉ CHURCH MARCH 30

On Sunday 30 March, being the fifth Sunday of the month, Reverend Christopher Page opened a café church, in dialogue with Simon Lim. Simon has been coming to SCUC for the best part of a year, and has been a lively contributor to discussions and conversations.

Chris started by asking Simon general questions about his background.

Simon comes from a Christian family – his parents and grandparents were from the Presbyterian and Methodist traditions. As a child, he attended Sunday School at quite traditional Churches. But he described himself as, for the most part of his life, a "nominal Christian". He was born in Malaysia of Singaporean and Malaysian parents and migrated to Australia as a teenager to attend Monash University, where he studied economics. After working in the Australian media, including in the Australian Financial Review, The Australian and the Herald-Sun, Simon returned to Singapore, where he worked as a banker for 26 years. He is now semi-retired.

Asked what brought him to SCUC, Simon explained that he was not a regular Church goer – explaining he was mostly a twice a year Church goer, attending at Christmas and Easter. But he was deeply affected by the Israel-Hamas conflict and came back to Church more regularly, looking for comfort and answers.

"At the time, I had Meniere's Disease, an inner ear disorder characterized by tinnitus, vertigo, and hearing loss, and was suffering from insomnia. I suspect my conditions were linked to

the anguish I felt about the conflict. I was so disturbed by the conflict; I came back to church."

"I came not looking for healing for my conditions. Not at all. I came looking for community and distraction from my ailments. But the first time I attended church, I left and went for lunch, and I was stunned that during lunch the Meniere's condition cleared up, just like that!

"I said to my daughter at the time that I thought the condition would come back again, and indeed a few days later it came back. Interestingly, my daughter, who is not a Church goer, surprised me by asking me to go back to Church again, as my condition might clear up again, she said. So, I did, the following Sunday, with no expectations. I went to the North Balwyn Uniting Church, and amazingly, when I walked out of Church that day, my ears cleared up!"

The conversation then turned to Simon's spiritual journey, which he described as a work in progress. He remembered reading *The Road Less Travelled*, by Scott Peck, a long time ago, which talked about the importance of struggle. He continues to struggle on that journey.

And on the topic of books, Simon revealed he was currently engrossed with books by historical-critical New Testament theologian Bart Ehrman: "Jesus Interrupted" and "How Jesus Became God". While the books challenged literal readings of the Bible, Simon found it was not necessarily contradictory to Christian faith. And he was reminded of Reverend Page's reflections that the Bible was often metaphorical and not literal.

In that context, he was reminded of something Reverend Page said in one of his reflections – that he was seated on a train across from somebody who broke one of the commandments from Leviticus. It was 19:28 which forbids the marking of the body. That is, tattoos.

"So, I am learning that there is a cultural context for things we read in the Bible," he said. "For example, dietary commandments can also be seen in the context of culture and time. Pork and shellfish, both of which are forbidden in Leviticus, are also foods that are quite literally unclean. In the old days, without proper sanitation and hygienic handling of meats, they were not particularly safe to consume," he said. Notwithstanding not taking everything literally in the Bible, Simon says he is learning to embrace the "new covenant of love" that is offered by Jesus Christ.

The conversation then turned to his culturally diverse background. He grew up in Malaysia, speaks Malay and Indonesian and a dialect of Chinese, and some Japanese (his wife is Japanese).

When Simon recently attended an Indonesian language Uniting Church service, he was struck by how vibrant the congregation was. There were three generations of families in attendance; the pews were full; and the service, with some elements of revivalism, was very enthusiastic. Although he was not familiar with that style of service, Simon participated with an open heart, and in the process, he found it very moving.

Reverend Page and Simon then talked about the rapid growth of Asian churches in Melbourne and why there was a healthy growth of Christianity among Asians. Simon suggested that it might have something to do with European (including British) cultures having a longer history with secularism and hence individualism, emerging from the Renaissance and subsequently industrialisation. Asians, with a shorter history of individualism, tend to see their lives more in the context of the community. And notwithstanding respect for learning and science, they tend to have more openness to the spiritual, or the "enchanted".

"If you believe the individual is the most important thing, it is a bit more difficult to embrace religion, as that requires one to surrender a bit of oneself to the Church and a lot of oneself to the spiritual, to God," he said.

After the serving of refreshments a lively discussion ensued based on varied questions

from the assembled, ranging from “How did you meet your wife”, through to “Why did you not go back to the Indonesian church” to “When did Christianity come to Asia”! Simon responded to all questions with good grace and humour.

Thank you for a thought-provoking conversation!

Support for Riyaz and Arezoo

Accommodation urgently needed

These two Iranian refugees have been loosely attached to Stonnington Community Uniting Church since they were brought to Melbourne from Nauru in 2019 for medical treatment. Margie Mitsikas has been a constant advocate and supporter for the couple, alongside some other Grandmothers for Refugees.

From the end of April, a change of visa means they must vacate their community detention apartment and find alternative accommodation. Their most immediate need is secure accommodation until they recover from urgent surgery and can find work. If anyone knows of a suitable place that is available, please let us know.

We will also invite members of the congregation for contributions towards rent and upfront costs such as a bond, and also for ongoing in-kind help with living expenses, until they are well enough to work and support themselves.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this appeal for help.

Alison Tokita

The following article was published in *The Melbourne Anglican*, 19 April 2025

HIDDEN UNDERCURRENT OF AUSTRALIANS’ TURN TO CHRISTIANITY

Hannah Felsbourg

Hundreds of thousands of Australians are quietly turning to Christianity despite a national trend of declining religious affiliation, new research has revealed.

Nearly 785,000 Australians who identified as having no religion in the 2016 Census listed Christianity in 2021, according to a study released by social research firm McCrindle.

The findings challenge the prevailing narrative that Australia is becoming increasingly secular, instead uncovering what researchers call an undercurrent of faith.

McCrindle Research founder Mark McCrindle said the data revealed a profound search for meaning beneath Australia’s seemingly secular surface.

“In a culture often perceived as post-Christian, it’s significant that hundreds of thousands of Australians are turning towards Christianity, even while others turn away from it,” Mr McCrindle said.

The research combines analysis of the Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset with a nationally representative survey of over 3000 Australians.

Surprisingly, the growth in Christian identification is not being driven by overseas migration but predominantly by Australians aged 55 and older.

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of Australians aged 55 and over who changed from no religion to Christianity increased by 48 per cent to nearly 195,000.

The research also revealed that while younger generations are less likely to identify as Christian overall, those who do are far more committed to regular church attendance.

More than 70 per cent of Generation Y Christians and 68 per cent of Generation Z Christians attend

church at least monthly, compared to just 26 per cent of Baby Boomers who identify as Christian.

“These aren’t just shifts in census data—they represent real spiritual journeys,” Mr McCrindle said.

“Particularly for younger Australians, identifying as Christian today is a meaningful decision that typically leads to active church involvement.”

Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads vicar the Reverend Liz Rankin said she had witnessed this spiritual searching firsthand in her parish.

“Last year, we had a period where people were walking in off the street because they felt a sense they were needing to come to church,” Ms Rankin said.

She said a 42-year-old man arrived shortly after Easter last year, came to faith, and was confirmed only a few weeks ago.

Ms Rankin also mentioned two young families who approached the church requesting baptism.

“The thing that struck me was they see the darkness in the world, and they believe that they need to choose the light,” she said.

“The light that they had known as young children was actually Jesus, so they thought they needed to come back to church to find out more about Jesus and to choose his ways.”

The report found people who have recently experienced major life transitions such as bereavement, separation or divorce are among the most likely to turn to Christianity.

McCrindle senior researcher Shannon Wherrett said Australians were increasingly seeking spiritual connection and meaning in their lives.

She said people were drawn to Christianity primarily through personal spiritual experiences and the search for purpose.

However, the research also identified factors driving people away from faith, with disappointment in church leadership being paramount.

Just over half (51 per cent) of those who moved away from Christianity cited disappointment in the church due to a lack of accountability, hypocrisy and dishonesty as a key reason.

Among younger people, the primary reason for leaving faith was that religion was no longer relevant or meaningful to their lives (49 per cent).

Despite this movement away from Christianity, Australians appear increasingly open to spiritual exploration.

The proportion of Australians open to changing their religious views has more than doubled since 2011, from 8 per cent to 19 per cent.

Ms Rankin said it felt like the Spirit was stirring in people very deeply and prompting them to search for answers.

“I think younger people are looking for an authenticity in faith and in people,” Ms Rankin said.

“People … are questioning and saying, ‘Something’s going on spiritually for me and church seems to be the place that I need to come to try and work out what’s happening.’”

According to McCrindle, the research suggests that as cultural Christianity declines, what remains may be a smaller but more committed core of believers alongside a growing population open to spiritual exploration.

“Australians are looking for hope, for purpose, for something beyond themselves,” Mr McCrindle said.

“And for many, Christianity is where they’re finding it.”

SEARCH FOR NEW MINISTER

The Joint Nominating Committee continues its search for our new minister but there are no developments to report. Members of the congregation will, no doubt, find the lack of progress disappointing but the reality is that the Uniting Church suffers from a dire shortage of potential ministers.

Dick Carter

Easter greeting card

Dear Lencie,

I have drawn an Easter drawing for SCUC friends, I wish you will enjoy it.

Love,
Herro

ASRC Feast For Freedom

The **Feast for Freedom** held at our April lunch on 6th April raised $650.00. Here is the letter of appreciation from the ASRC.

Dear Joyce and Stonnington Community Uniting Church,

On behalf of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, I sincerely thank you for your generous donation of $650.00 from your Feast for Freedom. We will add this as an offline donation to your fundraising page.

You enable people seeking asylum in Australia to feel welcome and hopeful. Your commitment to this movement makes it possible to pursue justice, to protect people's human rights, and to support them to thrive. We are delighted that you share our vision for a better, more welcoming Australia.

Please save this as your official receipt.

Warm Regards,

Jo Gumley, Feast for Freedom Coordinator
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT
Joyce Jenkin / Sue McGrath

Music for church services: conversations have been held with two potential organists about playing at one service every month, till December 2025, commencing in May.

Further to a petition to Church Council from Margie Mitsikis and some other members to make the Coppin St Manse available as emergency accommodation for two refugees, Council decided after lengthy discussion of all factors, not to approve this proposal.

The Church Council also decided that it would support the refugees and Margie Mitsikis in her continued efforts to secure appropriate accommodation and ongoing Government financial support for the refugees through the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Uniting's Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre, and other welfare agencies. It was further agreed that Church Council and the congregation would provide in kind and other support to the refugees collected through free will donations from members of the congregation. Congregation members who are also members of Higgins Grandmothers for Refugees will be asked to help to coordinate this assistance.

With regard to property, Presbytery has approved repainting the exterior of Ewing House. Richard Nelson is redrafting the lease of the Manning Road kindergarten to suit Synod Legal. New carpet will be laid in May for the Ewing Memorial Centre, and a new lectern microphone has been purchased. Permits are being sought to remove three trees from the Manse for safety reasons.

Alison reported on planning for the Public Forum on Loneliness saying that aims of the forum are clarified, and the panellists are almost finalized.

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT
Lorna Henry

Our meeting in April ranged over four main topics:

1.Meeting a week after Easter, our first topic was exploring our understanding of the Easter message. One might think that this issue was well settled among people who have been church members for a long time! But the good news is that our understandings are always changing, with new insights.

We were stimulated by reports from a talk by Brian Macallan, who addressed a meeting of the Progressive Christian Network of Victoria earlier today.

There remain many unanswered questions in life, and the resurrection is one of them. The disciples had a transforming experience, not explicable by reason alone. Call it spiritual or mystical, it was something outside our normal, rational, sense-given experience.

Brian's talk challenged us to allow our minds to go beyond rationality when looking at the events of the resurrection- and at other times.
Information gained through our five senses is for our daily living, but not sufficient to put us in touch with ultimate truths.
Can we also open up to the possibility of mystical experiences?

2.This month, the 9th April, marked the 80th anniversary of the execution of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany. We watched a short video explaining the reason for his execution, and quoting the Christian ethic driving Bonhoeffer's willingness to be involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler.
He stated: Silence in the face of evil is evil; not to act is to act.
And so, he acted and was arrested and sentenced to death as a result. His was a full commitment to stand against evil and to stand for the good.

3.The recent death of Pope Francis and his funeral drew forth expressions of appreciation for a man who also lived by the Gospel message and did his best from within the Catholic Church structures to include and care for the marginalized, and to break down barriers.

4.And finally, we considered the plight of Arezoo and Riyaz, two asylum seekers known to us, and who are now, due to a change in their refugee status, in need of accommodation and practical assistance. They desperately need somewhere to live, immediately.

What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus, and how should we act?

Our next meeting is on Sunday 18th May, when we will pursue further our questions about how to live, how to act, as followers of Jesus.

LIBRARY NEWS
Faye Pattinson

A very lively Book Chat was held in April. The usual variety of genres was shared and some of these will be available in the next *InSpire*.

The talk by my son David on his book *Bees and Beekeeping in China prior to Modern Times* was well received and provoked lots of discussion and questions.

Our next Book Chat will be held on Thursday, 19th June. All are welcome with or without a book to share. Morning tea will be provided.

We were indeed honoured with the presence and participation of Faye's son, David, Associate Professor of Chinese Studies at the University of Leeds. His talk on bees in pre-modern China was

the highlight of the morning! David has kindly written a summary of his talk for *Inspire*.

What People Thought About Bees in Pre-Modern China

David Pattinson

Three things stand out about the way people in China thought about bees up until the nineteenth century. Firstly, the word *feng* could mean either bee or wasp; the only way to tell the difference was by context, or if a qualifying character appeared before it, such as *mi-feng* 'honey-bee'. Secondly, with rare exceptions, it was thought that all the bees were male. Thirdly, bee colonies were imagined to be Confucian kingdoms in which a king ruled over a court of officials who served him by collecting pollen from flowers.

Imagining that all the bees were male left the puzzle of how they reproduced. The most commonly accepted explanation came from a couplet in a hymn dating from perhaps the tenth century BC in the canonical *Poetry Classic*, a collection of hymns and songs analogous in status to the Psalms. This couplet, 'The snout moth has sons; the potter wasp carries them on its back', almost certainly refers to potter wasps stealing the larvae of snout moths to feed its own young, but it was thought that the potter wasp could cause the snout moth larvae to transmute into wasps by chanting 'be like me' over them. While honeybees do not steal the larvae from other insects, it seems that their physical similarities to wasps were enough to enable them to assume that bees reproduced in the same way. A text from about the early sixth century AD suggested this explanation was 'absurd', but no one came up with a better one; it was still being quoted in the nineteenth century. The only text to suggest that there were female bees was written by a seventeenth-century writer and official who came from a village where beekeeping was practised, but in line with Confucian social norms, he thought the female bees stayed at home doing the housework and looking after the children while the male bees went out and collected pollen from flowers.

It is impossible to know when it became known that there was one slightly larger bee that 'ruled' a bee colony. The earliest textual reference to a 'bee king' is in a translation of a Buddhist sutra from Sanskrit into Chinese done in the second half of the third century AD, but that is in an allegory with only two bees, not a serious attempt to describe a bee colony. A few decades later, the eminent scholar-official Guo Pu (276-324) wrote his ornate poem 'Rhapsody on Honeybees' which, while not actually using a word for 'bee king', clearly implied that there was one, and that the colony (not a word used in the Chinese) was like a royal court.

In the centuries before Guo Pu's poem, *feng* had almost always been portrayed negatively. They could symbolise fierce soldiers and treacherous officials, or 'swarms' of rebels or bandits. While Guo Pu's admiring poem was not decisive in the change, over time honeybees were often portrayed more positively, perhaps as people interacted more closely with bees in beekeeping so they seemed less of a threat. The existence of a 'king' ruling over other bees who performed a variety of roles in an apparently orderly manner enabled writers to think of honeybee colonies as royal courts in which 'officials' or servants served the 'king' according to the Confucian values of loyalty and diligent service as they collected pollen, made honey, raised the young and protected the hive. However, bees who failed in their duties in some way could be subject to lethal discipline, or if they had not collected enough pollen would stay away from the hive overnight out of shame. In later centuries, particularly during turbulent times, bees were sometimes portrayed as model societies more orderly and disciplined than humans, and some writers expressed consternation when bees were treated badly.

Of course, these attitudes were not universal. Hardly any of the educated gentry who wrote the texts we have would have handled bees

themselves, so they might have been more prone to idealise them. The farmers who actually did the beekeeping probably had a more pragmatic attitude, though given the income that could be made from beekeeping, most would have known that treating the bees well had financial benefits too. Indeed, several writers assumed that bees produced honey in part to pay 'taxes' or 'rent' to their human keepers in a mutually beneficial arrangement.

For further reading, you can find David's open access chapter, "Bees in China: A brief cultural history", contained in *Animals through Chinese history* (Cambridge University Press 2018).

https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/animals-through-chinese-history/bees-in-china/938DA35D140C2C4C8F04E108E7C2AAD8

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Lencie Harding

There was no Op Table in April due to Easter and Anzac Day.

A cheque for $400 was sent to Uniting with a request for the donation to be used to support Uniting Prahran's Winter Breakfast program. The following was received in reply:-

'Thank you for your thoughtful donation in support of people accessing our services at Prahran, in particular the Winter Breakfast program.'

We are planning to hold another Opportunity Table on Sunday 18th May to follow worship and will be very grateful for donations of goods.

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

SAMMY STAMP

Lencie Harding

My Sammy Stamp box is filling slowly. Any donations of stamps will be most welcome.

The following is Allan Clark's report for the May 2025 issue of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship magazine 'Net Work'.

Well, autumn is well upon us but Sammy Stamp's helpers keep warm by trimming, sorting and selling the stamps, coins and bric-a-brac all you dedicated supporters from all over the place send to us.

One item of bric-a-brac we recently found was a number of unused cable tram free tickets issued in 1919 for returned service personnel. (See details below.)

Some trivia: Melbourne's cable tram network operated between; 1885-1940 and at its peak, was the fourth largest system in the world.

Pop, my paternal grandfather, was a Pom from the Mid-lands of England, who, at the age of 4 years arrived in Australia per sailing ship (he lived to see man land on the moon) in Melbourne (or 'Smellbourne') as no reticulated sewerage system had yet been installed, The 'nightman' reigned supreme in 1888.

He, in tales of his youth, talked about how the lads, for entertainment, would tie some cord with a hook attached to an empty kerosene tin, then feed the cord into the centre gap of the tram tracks containing the continuous running cable that the gripman (cable car operator) would clamp onto to pull the tram along. On the hook grabbing the moving cable, the attached kerosene tin, careering down the road would create such a noise or din causing horses and perhaps other animals, to bolt. Pop's laughter at the end of the tale, indicated to me that perhaps he was one of the lads, or should it be larrikins, involved.

Oh! By the way, up to the end of March, sales had reached about $6,812 (same period, last year $5,095). No further grants have been approved, so the total of grants approved so far this year remains at $6,000.

Allan Clark
Convenor

SCUC COMMUNITY FORUM 2025

The date for our Community Forum on the theme **LONELINESS AND CONNECTEDNESS** has been set for **Sunday 24 August**, 3.00pm in the Church.

Aims of the forum: to raise public awareness of loneliness as a social issue, AND to provide an opportunity to connect and volunteer.

Confirmed panellists: Debbie Holmes (Avalon Centre), Kerri-Anne Brussen (JoCare), Lily Odrian, Carina Garland MP for Chisholm (pending the May 3rd election result!), Michael Sandbach.

Working Group members: Kerri Anne Brussen, Iain Clarke, Debbie Holmes, Joyce Jenkin, Sue McGrath, Alan Sandbach, Maria Sandbach, Alison Tokita, Hiro Tokita.

We would like to involve you all and we value your ideas. This is not a matter for which there is one solution, nor can it be completely resolved. However, we can all try to develop a better understanding of why loneliness is a social issue which is becoming an increasing concern

In preparation for the Forum, I invite you to consider the following questions

- To what extent do you think loneliness is an issue in our society?
- How would you define loneliness?
- What different kinds of loneliness are there?
- Are you affected by loneliness?
- Do you know people who are?
- What are the antidotes to loneliness?
- Does the church have a role to play in addressing loneliness in the broader community?

Please send your thoughts to Alison by email or in person.

Let me share an article relevant to the problem of loneliness published in *The Age* on April 18. According to Millie Muroi:

"If you're sharing a meal with someone this Easter, chances are you're happier.

"In fact, it's as strong an indicator of how happy you are as the amount of money you're raking in and whether you're holding down a job.

"That's according to this year's World Happiness Report, which examined data from a survey across 142 countries and 150,000 people, finding the link between meal-sharing and happiness holds regardless of age, gender, country or culture."

You can read the whole article here:

https://www.theage.com.au/business/the-economy/whether-you-eat-alone-is-one-of-the-best-predictors-of-happiness-20250416-p5ls8w.html?btis

Alison Tokita

For the Forum WG

THE JOY OF SINGING AT SCUC

The Ewing Choristers turned up in force to sing "All Glory Praise and Honour" on Palm Sunday, and in even greater numbers to shake the rafters with "Lift up ye heads, O ye gates" on Easter Day.

We will sing next at the service on May 11 (Mother's Day!).

It is not too late to join our little group. The ranks are swelling each time we gather and there is still room, especially for tenors! Do we have any lady tenors, perhaps?

We practise just before the service, no weekday practices. All voices welcome!

Meanwhile, you will be able to hear the Yukari Echo / Japanese Ladies Choir perform at the annual Japan Festival at Box Hill Town Hall on May 25.

Sunday 25th May 2025 10:00 AM ~ 5:00 PM

Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill. For details, see

https://www.jcv-au.org/japanfestival/jf-about-en

COMMON THREADS
Alison Tokita

We celebrated Anzac Day on Thursday 24th April with Anzac biscuits. Especially delightful were Rose Marie's batch with the secret ingredient of lemon zest.

Jo brought seven completed rugs (amazing!) which have been taken to the KOGO drop-off point at Wondoflex. Thank you so much, Jo!

We welcomed a new member, Chris, a violinist and knitter extraordinaire. She will be an inspiration with her beautiful knitting.

Next meeting will be Thursday 22nd May.

MONTHLY CAFÉ CATCH-UP
Tuesday 13 May from 2 pm
Venue: Mr Sister Café, 81 Waverley Road

This regular cosy catchup is the place for talking about all those things that can't be discussed at morning tea after church or in formal meetings. It is a great place to get to know people in an informal setting. Now the days are getting cooler, we will be able to sit in the sun-drenched glassed-in area at the rear. The service is lovely and friendly.

Hope to see you there some time. Contact Alison if you need a lift.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks to all for your contributions to the issue. Please keep sending me your news items and photos for *InSpire*. We also welcome letters and articles, so feel free to write about any topic of interest to you to share with our readers. *Letters to the Editor are also welcome.* And we can promote your events at no fee!

Deadline for the **June 2025** edition of *InSpire* is **Monday, 26 May.** Articles should be emailed to the Editor, Alison Tokita, at [redacted] where possible, or given in person.

CONCERT

The Astra Choir and soloists, with Helen Ayres *violin*, Niels Bijl *saxophone,* Timothy Phillips & Alexander Meagher *percussion*, Linda Kent *organ*

Sun, 11 May, 5pm - 7:30pm
St Mark's Anglican Church, Fitzroy

Music amid disorder, cruelty and obliteration: a polyphonic Passion from the heart of the 30 Years War is joined by a graphic Mass after the military coup in Chile, and a choral-poetic cycle from the French Resistance in the last winter of World War 2.

Christoph Demantius, Johannes-Passion, León Schidlowsky, Missa sine nome, Francis Poulenc, Un soir de neige, Philippe Hersant, Sept miniatures, Jean Ockeghem, Kyrie sine nomine, Nuevo canción chileno: Violeta Parra, Victor Jara, Sergio Ortega (il pueblo unido)

Book with HUMANITIX Tickets for good, not greed! Humanitix dedicates 100% of profits from booking fees to charity

(Ask Alison about a secret Discount Code!)

ROSTERS MAY 2025

STEWARDS:

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

MORNING TEA:
Sunday 11th Anne & Michael Read
Sunday 18th Jill & Barry Rogers
Sunday 25th Sue McGrath & Michael Williams

PRAHRAN MISSION DELIVERY

Bronwyn Wellings

CALENDAR MAY 2025

SUNDAY 4TH	**11 AM**	**EUCHARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH**
SUNDAY 11th	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**
TUESDAY 13th	**2.00 PM**	**CAFÉ CATCHUP AT MR SISTER CAFÉ 81 WAVERLEY ROAD**
SUNDAY 18TH	**10.30 AM** **5.00 PM**	**CHURCH SERVICE** **SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT**
THURSDAY 22ND	**10.00AM**	**COMMON THREADS**
SUNDAY 25TH	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**