



InSpire



NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 11, no 10

November 2025



The Divine Feminine!

Congratulations to Rt Rev Dame Sarah Mullally, Archbishop-Elect of Canterbury

InSpiring

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Symbols of the Divine Feminine: Doorways to Sacred Presence

In October we explored the presence of the divine feminine in our tradition. We can continue to honour this presence through symbols. In many spiritualities, symbols are not decorations — they are doorways. They help us move from what we can see to what we can feel; from thought to mystery. As the Christian story opens again to the wisdom of the Divine Feminine, certain symbols — long cherished across cultures — can help us reconnect with that sacred balance. Here are five such symbols and how they can become living gateways to the divine presence in our daily lives.

The Moon – The Rhythm of Renewal

The moon is one of the oldest symbols of the feminine. Its cycles of waxing and waning mirror the rhythms of our own lives — growth, fullness, release, and renewal.

Where the sun shines with constancy, the moon teaches us the holiness of change. It reminds us that darkness is not absence but gestation, a time for quiet ripening.

To pray with the moon is to accept life's seasons — to know that even in times of loss or uncertainty, the light will return. In her gentle glow, we glimpse the God who moves with us, not in straight lines, but in sacred circles.

Water – The Flow of Grace

Water is the element of emotion, healing, and birth — the very source of life. The Spirit is often imaged as a river or a living spring; Jesus calls himself “living water.”

To sit beside a river, to listen to rain, or to bless oneself with water is to encounter the flowing mercy of God. In the feminine dimension of faith,

water teaches us that divinity is not rigid or contained — it moves, adapts, nourishes, and shapes without force. When we honour water, we honour the Spirit who flows through creation, softening hearts and washing away fear.

The Spiral – The Journey of Becoming

The spiral appears in shells, galaxies, and ferns — a universal sign of evolution and transformation. It draws us inward to our centre and then outward again to the world.

Spiritually, it represents the feminine path of growth — not climbing upward toward perfection, but circling ever closer to wholeness. To walk a spiral in prayer or imagination is to experience God as both immanent and transcendent — within us and beyond us — inviting us to dance with creation rather than conquer it.

The Flower – The Unfolding of Beauty

The flower reveals God's artistry in every petal. Its quiet opening toward light mirrors the soul's unfolding toward love. Flowers are transient, yet they give themselves fully to the moment — teaching us to trust in the sacredness of each day. In the Divine Feminine, beauty is not luxury; it is revelation. When we tend a garden, decorate a table, or notice the small wildflowers in a crack of concrete, we honour the Spirit who finds holiness in the delicate and the ordinary.

Mother Earth – The Sacred Body of God

All creation bears the divine imprint, but the Earth herself has long been called *Mother*. From her we come; to her we return. She nourishes, shelters, and sustains all that lives.

To walk gently on the Earth is a spiritual act. Every breath, every meal, every step becomes a

prayer of gratitude when we remember that the ground beneath us is alive with God's presence. Honouring Mother Earth restores our bond with the sacred web of life — reminding us that to care for creation is to care for God's body.

Walking Through the Doorways

These symbols — moon, water, spiral, flower, and earth — are not merely poetic; they are invitations. Each one opens a way to experience the Divine Feminine within God:

- The moon invites trust in life's cycles.
- Water calls us to flow with grace.
- The spiral draws us into transformation.
- The flower teaches us to open in beauty.
- The earth grounds us in reverence and care.

In their light, we remember that the Divine Feminine is an ancient dimension of the One God — the side that nurtures, heals, and creates. When we honour her, we help restore the balance of heaven and earth, spirit and body, word and womb — and in that balance, we find peace.

John Power

Who is "The Right Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally, Archbishop-Elect of Canterbury"?

Sarah Mullally has had a most remarkable career including her appointment as a Dame of the British Empire for her work as the youngest ever Chief Nurse of England before her ordination (what an over-achiever!). Her ascent up the ranks of the Church of England following her ordination in her mid-forties has been nothing short of

stellar. Since consecration as the second female bishop in that Church she rose remarkably quickly to the third most senior bishopric in England (London) and automatic appointment thereby to the House of Lords as a Lord Spiritual.

Extract of a comment by Glen Cardy, shared on Facebook by the peripatetic Dick Carter

What I find interesting about the appointee isn't so much her gender, or her theology (labelled 'liberal'), but her skill set. For Sarah Mullally's first profession was nursing. And, although she started on the wards, she rose through the nursing ranks to become the Chief Nursing Officer of Britain. Fun fact, the NHS has 423,000 nurses. She received a 'Dame-ship' for her service.

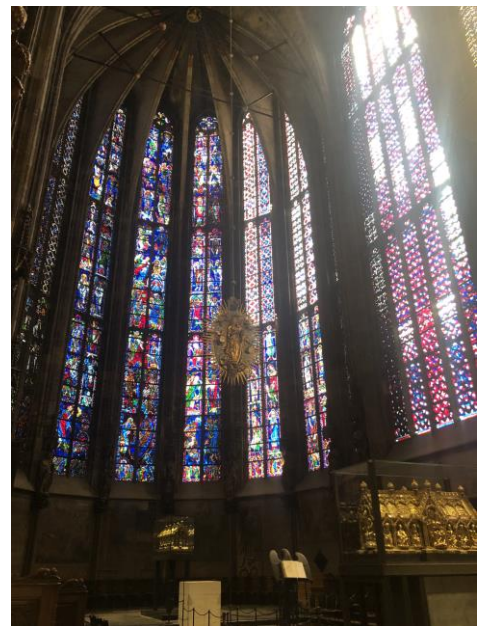
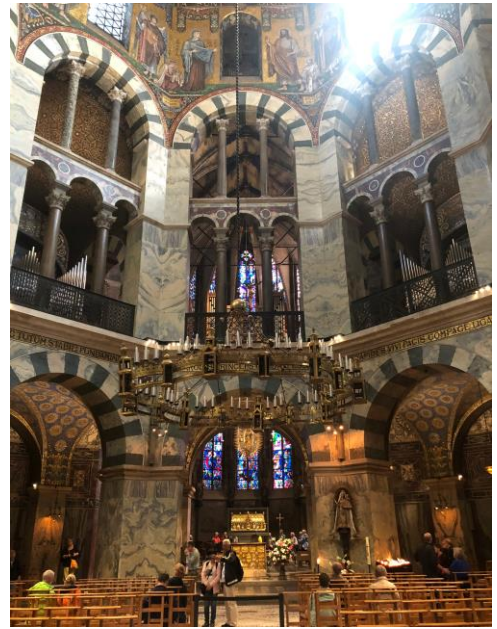
Reading through her public curriculum vitae it seems she has held positions as a staff nurse, an ethics teacher, and in governance roles in universities. But maybe more importantly, especially in the last two decades, she has experience as a manager and strategic leader of large institutions (she is currently the Bishop of London). These roles, I would guess, involve significant conflict resolution.

So, what this looks like – and I have no personal knowledge of how gifted she is in such leadership roles – is that those appointing her have chosen not a theological teacher, or renowned preacher, or exemplary pastor, or community builder, or inspirational entrepreneur, but an experienced and sound institutional leader. Someone who not only knows and cares for people but has the skillset to run a big ship.

The challenge for any church - small, medium, big, or institutional – is how to manage the expectations, infrastructure, and offerings of a traditional church and at the same time nurture and encourage spirituality wherever and in whatever form it may be found. To be overly simplistic, one could call the former religion and the latter spirituality.

And I think that modern day church leaders try to balance these two, some tipping one way, some the other. Of course, there are many different types of people and types of leaders in the church - some gifted in management and strategy, some in teaching and preaching, some in pastoring, some in community building, and a few in entrepreneurship. Rarely does one fit all, or most, expectations.

I suppose that's my fear for Dame Sarah. Not the blatant sexism. Or the snobbery around which university she didn't attend. Or the trappings of state religion and it's foundation of privilege. No, my fear is the multiple expectations placed on her at this pinnacle. I hope she has the courage to be herself, leave undone the many things that others are telling her should be done, and be at peace.



Some very old churches in Germany and England

Lorna Henry

During my recent trip to Germany, I had the privilege visiting historic and very different churches.

The cathedral in Aachen was for centuries the coronation church for rulers of the Holy Roman Empire of the North, beginning with Charlemagne in 800AD. The octagon at its centre is the earliest part, and imitates the 6thC San Vitale church in Ravenna, and, as in the original, the interior is covered in mosaics.

In following centuries, a magnificent Gothic choir was added, with tall windows of stained glass. This section contains a golden shrine to Charlemagne.

The Dom is still a functioning Catholic Church today.

In Bavaria, a church nearly 1000 years younger than the Aachen Dom demonstrates the joys and excesses of the Baroque. Too much decoration is never enough! This is an 18thC pilgrimage church in the countryside, dedicated to fourteen saints who are believed to have performed miracles; the church of Vierzehnheiligen.



In northern Germany, the plain lines of red brick churches with their copper spires and sober interiors tell of Lutheranism, simplicity and reason. They are noble, often very large buildings, dominating the towns with their sky-piercing spires. In Lübeck and Uelzen, these characteristics are exhibited superbly.

A few days in England at the end of our travels enabled visits to some Saxon churches in Surrey. These were built before 1066 and the arrival of William the Conqueror.

We saw three, two of them in open country on the estate of a local Lord or Duke. They are all small stone buildings, squat and fortress-like, quite odd in layout, telling of how they were initially small buildings which have been added to over the centuries. They are still active parish churches.

A wonderful variety, each telling the story of their part in history.



A Reflection on Grief

Review of *Memorial Days* by Geraldine Brooks
(Hachette Australia, 2025)

It is unusual to choose to read a book about grief and loss. However, I admire the Australian author Geraldine Brooks and as her 2025 memoir *Memorial Days* was on Boroondara Library's **Most Wanted** stand, I took both a risk and an opportunity. I was not disappointed.

In 2019 Geraldine Brooks' husband Tony Horwitz (aged 60) died dramatically and unexpectedly when he collapsed in the street from a "myocarditis event" (heart attack) whilst on a book tour in Washington DC. She was at their home in Martha's Vineyard (an island in Massachusetts) on the American public holiday "Memorial Day" when she received the devastating phone call.

Over 35 years of marriage, two sons, and high profile careers as foreign correspondents and authors, the Brooks/ Horwitz relationship, affectionally known as "HoBro", was deep, supportive, almost symbiotic. Suddenly, without warning, Brooks has to suspend grief and navigate the business of death on her own. She ricochets from detached, weary morgue officials to the claustrophobic embraces of well-meaning friends, not allowing herself to weep or scream. Three years later, post COVID, Brooks finds time and space to honour her loss and reflects by seeking solitude and isolation on remote Flinders Island in Bass Strait, where she writes of this time: her own days of memorial.

Flinders Island is chosen as her refuge because Horwitz and Brooks had spent time there together early in their marriage. The island's brutal white/indigenous history is touched on, and the descriptive beauty of its flora, fauna, geology and rugged landscape is soothing in the background, providing both author and reader with relief, and moments to pause.

Brooks' memoir is divided into short chapters which are distinguished by place, generally moving between West Tisbury (on Martha's Vineyard) and Flinders Island. Within each chapter the paragraphs are short, following a loose linear narrative interspersed with flashbacks of moments and events throughout their lives together, including extracts from Horwitz's journals, and a brief discussion of the death and funeral rituals of major religions. Then there are poignant, gut-wrenching moments: for instance, when Geraldine and her sons Natty and Bizu bury Tony's ashes in his baseball mitt on Chilmark Field, where he had delighted in playing summer softball. Another is when Geraldine accidentally runs over the faithful family dog before driving Ellie, her 90-year-old mother-in-law, to the airport shortly after the funeral.

It is a writing style that has a musing introverted effect, as the author shares her heart, and we walk hand in hand with her through her trauma.

Memorial Days is raw, honest and poetic. The reader feels privileged to share the author's experience of grief and loss; and it nurtures our general sense of empathy. In telling her story, Brooks regains control; quoting Salman Rushdie, she asserts "power over the story that dominates [her] life." There is much wisdom, love and practical advice from her experience; referencing Leigh Sales' *Any Ordinary Day*, Geraldine Brooks leaves us walking gently and cherishing beauty in the moment.

Maria Sandbach

**STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING
CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT**
Joyce Jenkin

A screening of the documentary film "Love in the Walls" has been tentatively booked for Sunday 22nd February from 3 -5pm including a Q & A session with the CEO of Servants Housing, a group that houses the homeless.

The Christmas Day service will be at 9am as it has been in the past. There will not be a service on Sunday 28th December as John will be on annual leave.

Alison has prepared a program for the carols service on 21st December at 7pm.

John has prepared a pamphlet on Evolutionary Christianity. Council approved the distribution of the pamphlet and also the provision of a stand attached to the wall in the hall on which to display it.

There was discussion about possible future directions for our church.

The Asbestos assessment has been completed with labels and one repair having been done.

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT
Lorna Henry

October's meeting on Sunday 19th was held at the church hall to a background of the Musical Society of Victoria's concert performers warming up in the McKinnon Room!

Each person shared an issue of personal growth and enrichment. Topics included caring for aged parents, divorce, intercultural understanding, pan-psychism and spirituality, sharing through music, meditation, and experiencing joy and pain.

Though a small number of attendees, it was a fruitful gathering where participants got to know each other more fully.

The November meeting on Sunday 16th will be led by Rev John Power and will touch on connections between spirituality and Artificial Intelligence! Prepare to be intrigued! We will meet at 5 Vickery Street again.

LIBRARY NEWS
Faye Pattinson

The next Book Chat will be Thursday 20 November at 10.30 in the McKinnon Room. Come with a book to share, and also come and share some Christmas cheer, as it will be the last meeting for this year.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Lencie Harding

Treasurer, Jan Riches reported that the Fellowship Op Table held on Sunday 12th October raised \$202.90. In addition, the sale of Michael Williams' jams and marmalade raised \$54.35. Jan was able to bank \$257.25 to make our bank balance \$828.04.

Thank you to Michael and to everyone who supported the Op Table so generously by bringing and buying.

We are planning to donate \$300 to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) and \$300 to support the work of Frontier Services' Bush Chaplains.

The next Fellowship Opportunity Table will be held on Sunday November 9th.

SAMMY STAMP *Lencie Harding*

Thank you so much to Margie's friend Julie for donating a large tin full of stamps. Thank you also to Joyce who always saves any stamps received for Sammy.

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

Just a short, sharp report this month. Up to and including 25/09/2025 sales had reached about \$26,777. Similar period last year \$ 23,457.

We granted \$5,000 to UnitingWorld towards a project in West Papua to create opportunities for people to earn a living and build long term food security by restoring and protecting their environmental surroundings. This means we have approved \$25,000 in grants so far this year.

Thank you yet again for all the stamps, coins and other bric-a-brac. It is much appreciated.

Please send donations to:
Unit 64, Bert Newton Retirement Village,
4 Pioneer Walk,
HIGHETT, VIC 3190

Allan Clark
Convenor

COMMON THREADS *Alison Tokita*

At our October meeting an energetic group worked hard on their knitting, crochet and sewing up. Particularly striking was the work of Christine, who knits intricate diagonal patterns all without needing to sew up.



We also enjoyed an unusually gorgeous array of delicacies for morning tea, including muffins stuffed with walnuts and cream cheese icing made by our Coppin Street neighbour and regular participant, Rose-Maree Drake.

Next meeting will be Thursday 27 November, 10.00 to 12.00, in the McKinnon Room. We break for December, and will reconvene in the New Year on Thursday 22 January, same time, same place, followed by lunch! Come and see how good this group is!

LONELINESS AND CONNEXION!

A large component of the Forum on 24 August was the mini-Expo in the Hall. Here are brief profiles of some more of the participants: Men's Shed, JoCare and Avalon Centre.

East Malvern Men's Shed

Bill Jewell

The Men's Shed is a communal space where men can gather to socialise and work on projects together and are encouraged to pursue their interests. Whether it's meeting new people, woodworking, gardening, chess or just a chat and a cup of tea, our shed provides the necessary tools and space to do so.

Enquiries: phone [REDACTED] or email info@eastmalvernmensshed.org.au

JoCare

Leanne Ryan, CEO

JoCare is all about neighbours caring for neighbours. We're a local volunteer program based in Stonnington with a mission focused on helping to alleviate isolation and loneliness for older and vulnerable people in our community. Our wonderful volunteers visit neighbours weekly or fortnightly for a cuppa, a chat, a walk, or simply some company. These friendly visits create meaningful connections that brighten lives and build community. This free visiting service is available to people living independently at home or in Aged Care facilities in Stonnington and nearby areas.

JoCare also run a Digital Drop-In sessions at local libraries and neighbourhood houses, where volunteers help older residents with phones, tablets, and computers, giving people the confidence to stay connected with family, friends, and the wider world.

At JoCare, we believe everyone deserves friendship, dignity, and a sense of belonging. We are always on the lookout for wonderful volunteers wanting to make a difference and to

give back to the community. If you're Interested in volunteering, or know someone who might benefit from a friendly visitor please contact JoCare at admin@jocare.org.au <https://jocare.org.au/>

Avalon Centre

The Avalon Centre, located at 1936 Malvern Road (near the corner of Coolangatta Road) offers a "hand up" to people in need.

From their website <https://avaloncentre.org.au/>

"Avalon Centre brings hope, stability and support to the most vulnerable members in our community, through a range of Community Support Services and ongoing [tailored programs](#) for the residents from Avalon [volunteers and partners](#).

"Our aim is to meet the unmet needs in society and help people who have [slipped through the cracks](#). Put simply, Avalon assists those who have been forgotten, overlooked and left behind. This includes the homeless, people with mental health and physical disabilities, the elderly, refugees and anyone else who may benefit from our support.

"Community Support Services offered at Avalon include Avalon Homes for the Homeless, Avalon Drop-In Program, Clothes & Bedding Distribution. Avalon also offers individual support programs."

The Avalon Centre celebrated its 38th birthday in September! Founder and director, Deborah Holmes, is familiar to us as a speaker in last year's Forum on Homelessness and the recent Forum on Loneliness.

Fun Fact: Debbie also attended church at Ewing as a child and went on to teach Sunday School here!

You can view the latest news about Avalon in their October Gazette: [Avalonian Gazette](#)

Progressive Christian Network of Victoria

Also hosted by SCUC is the PCNV. This year, meetings have been held on Zoom, and past events are available on their website.

On 26 October, Rev Dr Christopher Page presented on the topic, "Can the Process Thought of Alfred North Whitehead, and the Process Theology of John Cobb, be integrated into Progressive Christianity?" Christopher is currently the minister at Highfield Rd Uniting Church. He has a doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Toronto, focusing on religion, epistemology and education.

Previous presentations you can catch up with on the same platform are Rev John Power on "An evolving creation story – How evolution challenges Christianity – and become its greatest Hope" (May and June), and Dr Merryl Blair on "Reading the Bible as Narrative: 1 The binding of Isaac, and 2: Ruth and Naomi" (August and September).

Worth dipping into!

QUEENSCLIFF – ONE YEAR LATER *Maree Burnett*

Who would have believed it? A year has passed since we last tackled the roadworks leading to and exiting from Westgate Bridge and headed off to Queenscliff. This trip, Joyce Jenkin, Kerrie Davies and I were joined by Sue McGrath on Monday, 20th October 2025. We were better organized this time too and had scheduled morning coffee freshly made by Greg on his fancy barista coffee machine for 10.30am in the Manse. However, Greg had to work ☹️ so Dana made us plunger coffee instead, which was very much appreciated.

With the addition of Sue in the car, conversation flowed endlessly, although much of it is quite forgotten now. We did cover the controversy that surrounds Prince Andrew; how some of us, as children, had moved home more than once, while others had moved home more in our adult years

- in the process learning details we had not known about each other.

As the GPS was not set for the correct address, we had to call Dana to direct us as the three who had been before could not remember the street nor did we pass the historic RED post box on the corner which would have led us right there. Anyway, we arrived, and Dana and Anouk were outside to greet us. There were hugs all around and Anouk was keen that we all knew she was included.

Dana still has those wonderful 'green fingers' as the gardens looked fantastic as these comparable photographs show. The one on the left was taken in 2024 and the one on the right was taken this year.



As Sue had not visited before, we had a quick tour of the garden where the roses, in all their glory, were a standout feature.

Dana told us that there were about 20 roses on the property. They all look healthy and most had a divine smell, which is often lacking in roses bought from the florist.

Dana had cleared the area surrounding the pond since last year, such that you could see it from a distance. In addition to the pond area, the side back garden contained flower beds, with roses, and vegetable beds, interspersed with grassy areas.



Even Anouk turned to face the camera when requested.

After touring the garden, it was time for a brief tour of the house. It is a lovely old house with plenty of windows on all sides which make it light and bright.

These windows provide marvelous views of the garden downstairs. Upstairs from the east-facing windows you can see the bay and the north-west offers views across the town. Dana told us she enjoys taking photographs of the sun rising over the bay.

It was soon time for our morning tea and Dana had made a delicious lemon cake and coffee. Greg came in from setting up the church and managed to give everyone a hug before heading off again.



It may not be the best photograph ever taken, but this was the view from my chair at the dining room table while having our morning tea. Very beautiful and peaceful to look at while enjoying great conversations with good friends.

After morning tea, we walked down to the town as we had a booking at a local café for lunch. While not seated outside, we could see the delightful courtyard garden from our vantage point inside.



After lunch, we continued our walk through the town and headed to the bay. As we walked along the edge of the headland, Dana pointed out all the features of the bay, including the Port Phillip Sea Pilots Station.

The service has been operating for 170 years. The pilot boats are responsible for all shipping in Port Phillip Bay. We were lucky to see a ferry heading off to Sorrento too.

The bay seems to stretch forever, looking out over the Pilots Station and pier towards the east across the bay.



Further along the headland is the Queenscliff High Light, one of only four black lighthouses in the world. It is the only black one (it is made from bluestone) in the Southern Hemisphere; it was built in 1862 to replace an earlier lighthouse on the same site.

The tower in the background is part of Fort Queenscliff, which was built in the 1860s as a military installation; it is now a Museum.



Looking towards the heads across the bay. Small waves roll in and break on the shores below. It was a calm day on the water.



And even though the sun was not shining as brightly as it could, the bright pink and yellow of the pigface (*Carobrotus*) growing along the fence line were showing their faces to the sky and adding a brilliant splash of colour on a grey day.

While the weather may have been a bit grey; the day was truly enjoyable – what more could you want?

We had great friends, delicious food and lots of walking exercise around a beautiful home, interesting town and expansive bay.



INTERMENT OF ASHES: JOAN THOMPSON

On Sunday, 26 October, there was a ceremony for the interment of the ashes of Joan Thompson, widow of Lindsay Thompson, both long-time members of Ewing Memorial (now SCUC). Rev John Power conducted the ceremony in the presence of their daughter Heather Coddington and Leigh and sons Murray and Theana and David and Maree Thompson and other family members, including grandchildren and great grandchildren. Both Lindsay and Joan

are remembered warmly by many in the congregation.



A Poem about Global Warming

When - A Common Nightmare

When productive fields
and island homes
are inundated by salty seas,

When coastal mansions
(with excellent views)
keep toppling from eroding cliffs,

When kelp and coral
fish and frogs are smothered by
pollution, heat and algae bloom,

When mountain snow and
glaciers finally retreat,
the rivers dry, yet flooded lakes
send tidal waves to ravish
cities, towns, and fishing ports;

When killer heatwaves
raging fires,
cyclonic winds and hurricanes
have done their worst
but then return,
before life has recovered;

When stock and wildlife,
human endeavour,
even predictable good weather
are regularly demolished by nature's ilk and
temper;

When autocrats and wars,
poverty, pandemics
and general complacency
have decimated economies,
communities and levity
as we all get hotter
under the collar;

When all is said and done:
will we feel humiliation
we didn't do enough
when we were able?

M. Mitsikas 2025

MONTHLY CAFÉ CATCH-UP Every THIRD Tuesday

Tuesday 18 November from 2 pm
Venue: Mr Sister Café, 81 Waverley Road

This regular cosy catchup on the **THIRD** Tuesday of the month continues to attract regulars and newcomers. Same place, same time, always convivial. The October gathering was at times uproarious and hilarious!



This is the place for talking about all those things that can't be discussed at morning tea after church or in formal meetings. Sometimes we get into "deep and meaningful" discussions too! It is a great place to get to know people in an informal setting.

Hope to see you there some time.

MUSIC LEADING UP TO CHRISTMAS

We have continued to enjoy the musical contributions to our worship over recent months: the Ensemble, Errol Fernando, Colin Prohasky, Hanford Lam. The Ewing Choristers have sung an anthem once a month, offering items by Arvo Pärt, John Rutter and others.

In November, the Ewing Choristers will sing "Come to me" by Christopher Willcock, accompanied by Errol Fernando on piano.

We then look forward to Christmas, with a lovely arrangement of "Angels We Have Heard on High" on 21 December morning service, and at the evening Carol Service we will sing "Three Kings on Persian Lands Afar" with baritone obligato.

We welcome singers to join in the Christmas music. We plan to practice on Sundays after church, so please come if you feel joyful!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Nine Lessons and Carols November 29th 6.30pm

Errol Fernando will lead the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols with the Old Trinitians Choir, continuing a tradition of his alma mater, Trinity College, Kandy, Sri Lanka. This tradition dates from 1946, and it has been carried on by old Trinitians in Melbourne for the past 26 years. The choir includes children and adults and they will sing in both English and Tamil. It is always a delightful and joyous event, highly recommended.

Tai Chi with Friends



Held every first & third Friday, this month's classes will be 7th and 21st November from 2.00 pm.

This is a precious opportunity to experience Tai Chi and enjoy the fellowship with members of the St Andrews Gardiner Indonesian church. Two or three from Ewing are taking part now! Afternoon tea is also provided.

Place: St Andrew's Gardiner Uniting Church 1560 Malvern Rd (Cnr Burke Rd), Glen Iris

Time: 2.00pm to 3.30pm. Meditation (five minutes), Limbering-up stretches (15 minutes), Taichi (25 minutes). Afternoon tea and chat (30 minutes). Donation optional.

For more information contact Elizabeth [REDACTED].

你好! (nǐ hǎo) – “Hello”!



CHINESE LANGUAGE CLASSES STARTING IN NOVEMBER

**Dates: November 21st and 28th, December 5th
and 12th**

Time: 4.00 to 5.30 pm

Why not expand your horizons by attempting to learn a new language, with a trained teacher! This may be your third or fourth language but all good, of course. You will be welcome to come and give it a go.

No previous knowledge of Chinese is required!
Just an open mind!

**Enquiries and expressions of interest can be
made to**

Zhuoran Wei. Tel: [REDACTED]

To register, contact Alison Tokita. Tel: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. Email: [REDACTED]

These classes will also include learning about Chinese culture and society, AND food!

Why learn Chinese 汉语?

Learning a foreign language expands our horizons, exercises our brains, and develops our empathy towards people of a different culture. It is not only acquiring a means of direct communication in speech and writing. Most of us have learned to use chopsticks as part of our intercultural journeys. The next step might be to learn some Chinese characters as a major part of

Chinese culture. As a tonal language, Chinese is of course challenging, but we can do it!

After all, learning is a healthy brain's best friend. Spending time gaining new skills, including a language, can boost brain neuroplasticity — the ability to grow, change, make new connections, and function in a new way. Language learning can change our brains and help slow cognitive decline!

再见 Zàijiàn See you soon!

Exploring the Nicene Creed

2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed – the most universally accepted of all statements of the Christian faith. But how much do we truly know about this statement of faith? This course at the Learning Hub of Ormond Uniting Church explores the Nicene Creed through accessible presentations and engaging discussion.

**Sundays – 26 Oct, 2, 9, 16 Nov (4.00 – 5.30
pm)**

**Venue: Ormond Uniting Church (cnr North
and Booran Roads**



- Week 1: Celebrating 1700 years: the Nicene Creed then and now
- Week 2: Unity in Diversity: the ecumenical call for unity

- Week 3: “Became truly human”: Christ in the Nicene Creed
- Week 4: Spirit-led Church: The Nicene Creed and the future of faith

See details at

[Learning Hub - Welcome to Ormond Uniting Church](#)

SAVE THE DATE!

Forthcoming Film Screening at SCUC: Sunday 22 February 2026

Readers may recall the article in the September edition of InSpire which recounted Alison, Anne and Maria’s visit to Servants Community Housing at Carrical House in Hawthorn.

Since then, we have made further contact with Servants, and are delighted with the opportunity to screen the 2025 documentary “Love in the Walls” at **SCUC on Sunday 22 February 2026**. This 60-minute film captures the warmth and community spirit at Servants’ Carrical House and is directly relevant to aspects of our 2024 Forum on Homelessness and 2025 Forum on Loneliness.

We envisage the screening of the film will be open to the wider community and that entry will be a gold coin donation. Amanda Donohoe (CEO of Servants) will be attending for a Q and A session after the film. Servants “Love of Good” products will be available for purchase; and we hope to provide afternoon tea.

If you would like to be involved in planning this event, we would love to hear from you!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

October 12

Dear Alison,

Many thanks for a most interesting edition of *Inspire* for October, with the moving tributes to

Keith McAllister and to Dorothy Grenness, plus articles on the “End the waiting” Vigil and on the garden project, as well as notes on regular SCUC activities.

I just wanted to add a note about Dorothy - a wonderfully loyal member and Treasurer of our Fellowship for many years. I remember that often she was invited to compose and then present a prayer at our AGM/Christmas afternoon tea, held at our November meetings. Her prayers were wonderful and always profound and she read them beautifully.

I shall soon count up the proceeds of our Fellowship Op Table held this morning, which I brought home in a well-worn, large, red purse. Dorothy had handed it to me, when I took on her role as the Afternoon Fellowship Treasurer!

Warm regards,

Jan

And further, from Lencie:

At UCAF Council's AGM held on Wednesday 22nd October, a candle was lit for Dorothy during the Memorial Minute for members who have passed away during the year.

Kind regards,

Lencie

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks to all for your contributions to the issue. We welcome letters and articles. Special thanks to Maria and Alan Sandbach for their editorial assistance.

Deadline for the December 2025 edition of *InSpire* is **Monday 1st December** (but preferably earlier!). Articles should be emailed to the Editor. We always welcome your contributions, including letters to the Editor!

CALENDAR NOVEMBER 2025

SUNDAY 2nd	11.00 AM	EUCCHARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH
SUNDAY 9th	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE
SUNDAY 16th	10.30 AM 5.00 PM	CHURCH SERVICE SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT
TUESDAY 18th	2.00 PM	CAFÉ CATCH UP AT MR SISTER CAFÉ 81 WAVERLEY RD
THURSDAY 20th	10.30 AM	BOOK CHAT
SUNDAY 23rd	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE
THURSDAY 27th	10.00 AM	COMMON THREADS
SUNDAY 30th	10.30 AM	CHURCH SERVICE