InSpire

NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 12, no 4 **May 2026**

Wonderful News!

Congratulations to John and Ella on their engagement

InSpiring

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

The God Who is eternally young
Finding the Spark Within

Most of us grew up with an image of God that feels like an old, weathered oak: ancient, unchanging, and perhaps a little distant. There is a quiet comfort in that "Ancient of Days"—a God who stands still while the world spins into chaos. But if we look closer at the Gospel—and the budding world outside our windows—we find another face of the Divine. This is not the God of the rearview mirror, but the God of the sunrise. This is the *Puer Aeternus*—the Ever-Young God.

An Ancient Story of Eternal Youth

The term *Puer Aeternus* is Latin for "eternal boy," and while it's a staple of modern psychology, its roots go back thousands of years. The Roman poet Ovid first used it in his *Metamorphoses* to describe Iacchus, a child-god of the Eleusinian Mysteries who represented the raw, renewing power of life.

Throughout history, this archetype has appeared in many forms:

- **Mythology:** He is Dionysus, the god of vegetation and resurrection, and Eros, the spark of desire and creation. In Egypt, he was echoed in the story of Osiris—a god who dies only to be reborn.
- **Literature:** We see his shadow in figures like Peter Pan, who refuses to grow up, or the Little Prince, who travels the stars with a child's unwavering curiosity.
- **Philosophy:** Friedrich Nietzsche saw the "child" as the final stage of human growth—a "sacred Yes" to life and a "self-propelling wheel" of new beginnings.

In every culture, the *Puer* represents the moment where potential breaks into reality. He is the harbinger of rebirth, reminding us that no matter how "old" the world gets, there is a force within it that is forever new.

The Theology of the Divine Child

For Christians, this historical archetype finds its ultimate expression in the "Divine Child" of the Nativity. Figures like St. Teresa of Ávila and St. Anthony of Padua were famously devoted to the Holy Child. They didn't see the Christ Child as just a "historical phase" Jesus grew out of, but as an eternal quality of God: a God who is vulnerable, playful, and completely open to the world.

What if God isn't just the "foundation" we stand on, but the "spark" that keeps us moving? We see this youthful Spirit in the stubborn green shoot pushing through pavement and in the way every morning feels like a fresh start rather than a repeat of yesterday.

A Quiet Comfort for Tired Souls

For many of us, life can feel heavy. We carry the weight of our years, our regrets, and a general sense of "tiredness." The idea of "eternal youth" might sound like another chore—one more thing we have to try to achieve.

But the Ever-Young God doesn't ask us to run a marathon or pretend we're twenty again. Instead, this God invites us to notice the life that is *already* moving inside us. Jungian analysts like Marie-Louise von Franz remind us that while the "negative" *puer* might avoid responsibility, the "positive" *puer* provides the creativity and hope necessary for a whole life.

Ask yourself:

- *Where is there still a tiny flicker of curiosity in my day?*
- *Where am I still capable of being surprised?*
- *Where is the "new" trying to break through the "old"?*

Faith as an Opening

The story of the Resurrection is the ultimate "puer" moment. It tells us that life doesn't belong to the past and that God is the Master of the New Beginning. Faith, especially as we grow older, isn't about white-knuckling the traditions of yesterday. It's about trusting that the Holy Spirit is still unfolding something fresh within our hearts. It's not loud, and it's rarely urgent. It's more like a gentle stirring—a reminder that God hasn't finished with us yet.

So today, take a breath and rest. You don't have to keep the world turning. Just stay open to the Ever-Young God who is, even now, making all things new—including you.

An Invitation: On Tuesday May 5th at 10am, we will explore this theme together in our Awakening to the Living Universe session. It will be a gentle and reflective space to consider the "eternal youth" within us—and the ever-young life of God that continues to move through all things. You would be very welcome to join us.

John Power

ASK THE MINISTER!

We continue the series in which John will answer questions about his life, his ideas, and his theological formation and development. It will be a theological reflection on his life, using an overall evolutionary framework. (Remember, he invites us to similarly reflect on our own faith journeys.)

Question:
What did you learn from your time in Broadmeadows and Dallas?

In the 1990s, I was minister of the Anglican parishes in Broadmeadows and Dallas, in Melbourne's north. It was a challenging but formative time. The needs in the community were significant, and the church itself was small and stretched. Quite quickly, I realised that the model of "helping" I had inherited wasn't going to be enough.

Like many, I had been shaped by the idea that helping is a one-way act: those who have, give to those who don't. You organise programs, gather resources, and offer assistance. It sounds good—and sometimes it does real good—but it can also unintentionally create a divide between "helpers" and "those being helped."

That model began to shift for me through something very simple: our foodbank. Each week, around a hundred people would come to the church hall for food parcels. One day, I wondered—what if the people receiving the food were also invited to help run the programme? What if they collected the food, packed it, and distributed it?

So, we asked. And people said yes.

What emerged was something quite different. The foodbank didn't just provide food—it became a place of shared ownership. People who had been seen (and perhaps had come to see themselves) as recipients began to rediscover their capacity to contribute. There was dignity in that. There was energy in that. And there was community in that.

That experience taught me something I've never really let go of: that the most life-giving form of mission is not *to* others, but *alongside* them. When we work alongside one another, something shifts. The categories of "giver" and "receiver" soften. We begin to recognise that we all carry needs, and we all carry gifts. The playing field levels out. And in that space, relationships begin to form—not just acts of service, but genuine connection.

There's also something deeply spiritual about this. In Christian language, we sometimes speak of the *mission of God*—the idea that God is already at work in the world, drawing people toward healing, connection, and wholeness. When we join in that work together, rather than doing things *for* others, we start to see that everyone has a part to play. People are not projects—they are participants. Not objects of care, but agents of love.

And something else happens too: as we look outward, we often find that something within us begins to grow. Working alongside others has a way of deepening compassion, humility, and gratitude. It changes us. Looking back, I can see that some of the strongest and most meaningful relationships I've formed in ministry have come not from what I've offered others, but from what we've shared together in common purpose.

So, what did I learn?

I learned that real community isn't built on charity alone—it's built on participation. I learned that dignity grows when people are trusted with responsibility. And I learned that when we serve *with* others, rather than simply *for* them, we often encounter something of the heart of God.

It's something I still look for wherever I am: opportunities not just to help, but to share in something together.

Peace, John

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FEAST FOR FREEDOM SUNDAY 31 MAY

Our next community engagement event will be the ***Feast for Freedom*** on Sunday **31 May 2026**. All proceeds from this occasion will be donated to the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre.

YOU ARE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN OUR ANNUAL FEAST FOR FREEDOM.

A special lunch to be held after the Sunday service on Sunday 31 May, 2026

This lunch will provide an opportunity to

- raise awareness that here in Australia, everyone deserves a seat at the table
- try out some new recipes from around the world
- share culture through food
- make a donation to the ASRC
- engage with each other
- hear an engaging speaker, a former asylum seeker from Iran

Bookings are essential and can be made via church website, or by telephoning the church office. Please book by Monday 25 May.

Feast for Freedom | Stonnington Community Uniting Church

Suggested donation: $30.00.
Your donation will be made on the day of the Feast, by cash or by card via QR code. All proceeds will go the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre the peak body that provides food, shelter, legal advice and health services for people seeking asylum and who need support settling into Australia.

The menu for our Feast will be drawn from special recipes provided by the ASRC, fostering connection and cultural awareness through sharing food.

The need to support the ASRC is even more urgent since the start of the US-Israel-Iran War on 28 February, as the cost of fuel and other commodities have risen dramatically.

So please keep up your weekly donations of food to both the ASRC and Prahran Mission, as well as attending the Feast for Freedom on 31 May.

It would be wonderful if you could bring friends and family members too.

MUSIC MISSION

Music is not simply something we do in worship; it is as a way of building community, deepening spiritual life, expressing joy and opening new doors to those who may not yet feel at home in church. This conviction is being embodied in the formation of the adult community choir, SpiritSong. This choir, directed by Houston Dunleavy, debuted by performing in church on Sunday15 March, and for the Tenebrae Service.

The choir is being shaped around a simple but powerful rhythm, focusing on songs that are “spiritual but not religious”.

Meanwhile, the Ewing Choristers continue to be part of the music mission, and are singing in the service every second Sunday.

The Music Soirees that have been held at Isabelle’s home also form part of the Music Mission, as do all the sacred music we enjoy as part of our worship. John’s eclectic selection of recorded music in worship adds to the mix. We are blessed with the musical dimension of our spiritual lives.

AWARD FOR DICK CARTER

Richard Carter receives the Jim Adams award from the Centre for Progressive Christianity in the USA

Congratulations Dick on a well-deserved award. I have known Dick for over 20 years. During that time, he has been an energetic leader and supportive participant of the Progressive Christian Movement thought out the world and particularly in Victoria, Australia.

As an Australian initiative the "Commons Dreams" annual conference has drawn participants for around Australia. Dick has been an active presence in this triennial gathering since its inception in 2006 and lead organizer of the Melbourne gathering in 2020.

Dick's leadership has always been warm, encouraging, and cooperative. His commitment to Progressive Christian thought and values is obvious to me and all those with whom he has worked. This award is a significant and worthy honour to a strong and compassionate leader; a man I am privileged to call my friend.

Christopher Page

(Committee Member PCNV)

VALE IAN VIVIAN JENKIN
(2 Sep 1945 – 20 March 2026)

A beautiful memorial service was held for Ian on 1 April, conducted by Rev John Power. The eulogy was delivered by Ian and Joyce's children, who have kindly agreed to let us print it here.

John:

Ian was born in 1945 in Rainbow in western Victoria. His father Viv (Hedley Vivian) was a Presbyterian minister and his mother Thelma was a teacher. The family soon moved to Donald where Ian spent his formative years. The family were very involved in the Parish life as you would expect, but also took the time to travel through regional Victoria spending time with family and visiting favourite locations like Queenscliff and the Grampians.

After Ian finished Form 5 the family moved to Bendigo so Ian could complete his matriculation.

After finishing school Ian moved to Melbourne to attend teachers' college where he studied to become a secondary history, geography and politics teacher. Ian started his teaching career at Timboon High School.

While in Melbourne Ian joined the PFA at Scot's church it was here that he met not only life-long friends…, but also his future wife Joyce.

Ian and Joyce married in Perth in January 1970, with Viv officiating. They enjoyed a honeymoon touring the Southwest of WA, with a few stops to look at steam trains, before returning to Melbourne.

Ros:

Ian and Joyce moved to 6 Hope St Glen Iris in the early 1970s where they lived for almost 40 years. During this decade they welcomed two daughters Roslyn and Bronwyn. Ian taught at Fitzroy High School and became more involved with the Australian Railway Historical Society (ARHS). Joyce and Ian also joined the congregation of the Ewing Memorial Uniting church.

The start of the 1980s was a very sad time with the death of Bronwyn in January 1980 and then

the passing of Ian's father Viv in 1981. Amidst the sadness there was joy with the arrival of a son John and then another son Dave. Throughout this time Ian kept himself busy with his involvement in the ARHS community, keeping in touch with long-time friends and weekly visits with his mother Thelma, and serving on the Ewing Parish council as Parish Secretary.

He taught at Chadstone High School, which he was very disappointed to see close. At the end of the decade Ian enjoyed a well-earned break taking six months long service leave to enjoy the Australian Festival of Steam and the visit of the Flying Scotsman engine to Australia, spending many hours doing what he loved; drives in regional Victora, photographing and sound recording the engine in this environment with four-year-old Dave in tow.

You can't reflect on this period of Ian's life without reflecting on his involvement in the Australian Railways Historical Society. He was part of the publication committee, the slide competition adjudication, the Great Railway swap meet, and promoting the society at annual events like the Eucha Steam and Traction engine rally, and a long-term committee member, including an extended period served as President.

In the 1990s Ian taught at Camberwell High School, continued to be involved in the ARHS and Ewing, and enjoyed spending time introducing John and Dave to the Grampians and other places in regional Victoria he had happy memories of from his own childhood on trips with his parents. Towards the end of this decade Ian faced his own personal struggle with mental illness and took some time for treatment and recovery, with much support from Joyce, John and Dave. The end of this decade also saw the passing of his beloved mother Thelma, who had endured seven years of debilitating dementia in aged care. He was able to return to teaching at Forest Hill Secondary College and continued to take pleasure and pride from supporting his students to succeed and always being involved to support extracurricular activities like school productions and the solar car challenge.

Dave:

Ian retired in 2008 bringing a close to his more than 52-year career with the Education Department.

In the early years of their retirement Ian and Joyce travelled extensively with trips to the United Kingdom, Finland, Russia, Italy, and the highlight was a Silk Road focussed tour which included Greece, Turkey, Uzbekistan and India.

Retirement also allowed Ian more time to volunteer with the Newport Railway Museum both as a guide on weekends as well as extensive work cataloguing and digitising items in the museum's archives.

Ian also continued his long commitment as a member of the Stonnington Community Uniting church congregation.

Weddings and grandchildren were also a blessing in retirement, with Ian a proud father at John and Rachelle's wedding and Dave and Megan's wedding 10 years later. Love and pride shone from every pore as Ian held each of his grandchildren, Zoe, Leon and Caspian, as babies.

In March 2023 Ian suffered a stroke which along with impacting his memory also necessitated full-time care, requiring Ian to move into residential care. Initially Ian was able to continue with some of his previous activities like attending church and family functions, but as time went on and his health continued to decline this was no longer possible.

Despite the impact of the stroke on his short-term memory, until the end Ian held onto many treasured memories of his youth which he continued to share with us, such as how he came to have his childhood stuffed owl whilst living in Donald as a child. His time teaching and the students he met along the way. Stories from when he first met Mum and then meeting the in-laws, family camping trips, and much more.

In February this year, Ian's health declined significantly and after a short time in hospital he returned to the more comfortable surroundings of

MECWA care in Malvern before passing away on the afternoon of the 20th March after spending his last few hours with Mum.

Ian was a dedicated, focussed, loyal person who always looked after his family first, despite his many and varied interests and commitments. Despite events that challenged him, he demonstrated that taking joy in the simple pleasures in life that interest you gives meaning and purpose.

He took great support from Joyce through all of life's challenges they faced together, and although he wasn't able to show it towards the end, she was his soulmate and rock throughout their almost 60 years together.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Alison,

In memory of Ian Jenkin, would you consider reprinting a write-up of the first of Ian's excellent talks/presentations to the Afternoon Fellowship group in March 2010.

It wasn't easy putting together a programme year after year so I was always very grateful to Ian for offering to speak to the group at four of our meetings.

Kind regards,
Lencie

Ian Jenkin's talk for Afternoon Fellowship, March 2011: "The Fascination of Trains"

Ian began his presentation by introducing us to the Australian Railway Historical Society (ARHS) Victorian Division which caters for all who are interested in railways. The NSW Division was established in 1933 followed by the Vic Division in 1945. The Vic Division, of which Ian is President, has over 750 members, who come from a broad cross-section of the community and include students, engineers, teachers, railway staff and actors.

The magazine *Newsrail* is published by the Vic Division and *Australian Railway History* by the NSW Division and distributed nationally. The ARHS Vic Div has its own book store from which purchases can be made.

Videotapes and sound recordings are also being produced by ARHS members to preserve the sights and sounds of railways over the years. Attempts are made to run a number of major rail tours to make use of significant locomotives, steam, diesel and electric, but unfortunately with a privatised rail system this can prove difficult with five or six bodies to deal with. ARHS also works in cooperation with major tour operators who wish to charter locomotives. Ian mentioned that a number of highly successful centenaries and anniversaries have been held in particular the 150th anniversary of the Melbourne and Hobsons Bay railway when guests including the Jenkin clan dressed in period costume.

Since 1962, the Railway Museum at North Williamstown has been run by the ARHS Vic Division. It is open to the public at weekends and public holidays and displays a representative collection of locomotives including the largest steam engine from H Class, H220, known as 'Heavy Harry'. Ian said that space constraints won't allow the display of all the locos. A more

appropriate site with more space is urgently needed.

A fascination with trains can include an interest in one or any number of aspects of rail. There is something for everyone, such as the study of railway buildings, including stations from the grand to the tin shed or the viaducts at Taradale and Moorabool, being notable examples of infrastructure.

The railways over the years have been used to fulfil the needs of a growing nation. They are central to economic growth and commerce. In addition to transporting freight, they are also the safest method of transport for people. Ian mentioned the enormous contribution that railways have made to the social history of Australia.

Locomotives can be seen as static attractions in parks or restored and preserved for tourist railways such as the Pichi Richi Railway at Quorn in S.A., the Bellarine Railway, and the Lithgow Zig Zag rail line which was restored as a tourist attraction using a 3'6" gauge. Puffing Billy, Australia's best known and loved steam train was the model for these.

The preservation and restoration of rolling stock is no easy task. The restoration of carriages and passenger compartments is hard difficult and dirty work. Cleaning and servicing a locomotive is not a job for the faint hearted.

Ian described rail fans as bower birds. They love to collect just about anything rail related such as documents, maps, photographs, lamps, tickets, name plates, gauges, fittings, tools, whistles and sound recordings which they exchange at swap meets.

The joys of rail travel are not just arrival at a destination but the fun of getting there. Travel to a distant place can include a walk along the corridors, a good sleep in a prone position, views from the windows, sights, sounds and sensations. A proper meal served on proper crockery can be enjoyed in the restaurant/dining car and there is always plenty to talk about. Ian compared this to plane travel.

Ian mentioned the Rail Trail movement. Abandoned railways have been converted into trails which have become popular with cyclists and walkers.

The power and speed of trains is enormous. e.g. the massive 30,000 tonne iron ore train at Port Hedland. Ian described the pleasure experienced while riding behind an express locomotive travelling at 150kph while motorists in cars nose to tail sit watching in envy. In 1985 Steam Rail Victoria restored the first of the R Class locos, the R761, which during a full power test achieved a speed of 150kph on long stretches.

The thrill of the chase delights many a rail enthusiast – the excitement of seeing a special train or wondering what will turn up on a line. There are always railway stories and folklore to be shared.

Ian concluded his presentation with two amusing railway stories and added that members of the 'funny hat brigade' are a pretty reasonable lot.

To illustrate his talk Ian treated us to a feast of amazing rail slides in his PowerPoint presentation. Cassette tapes were used to bring his descriptions and visuals to life with the sound of steam, chuffing steam locomotives, wheels and whistles. The sound of steam on the 5'3" brought back memories of rail journeys of an earlier era to many of our members.

Jan thanked Ian for his wonderful and evocative presentation.

REPORTS

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Joyce Jenkin

The following matters were discussed at the April council meeting:

- Music initiatives: the Spirit Song choir is off to a good start.
- We discussed the possibilities for reaching out to other faith groups.
- Noticeboards:
    - The possibilities for the redesign of the noticeboards at the front of the church and on the corner were discussed - this is a work in progress.
    - Council agreed to go ahead with the purchase of an electronic noticeboard to be placed behind the glass front doors.
- The Maundy Thursday dinner and service were a great success but unfortunately there were not enough helpers. This raises the problem of catering for events; we need to know what people are going to bring when they are asked to provide food for the lunches, etc. there needs to be more planning for events and / or simpler meals.
- It was agreed that we would accept the quote to replace the gas heaters in the Ewing Centre with split system air conditioners.
- Also discussed were the possibilities of livestreaming or using Zoom to project Sunday services for members who are unable to attend. This was not considered practical but it led to a wider discussion of what electronic ministry we should have. Possibilities include John's slides on the website and also researching the possibilities over a number of platforms.

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT

Lorna Henry

There was much concern in our April discussion about the state of mind of youth, and the state of mind in all of us in these unusual and potentially threatening times. We find ourselves in danger of concentrating on the problems around us instead of the solutions; it's harder to find solutions.

Mental health problems in young people are many and apparently widespread. Jonathan Haidt, an American social psychologist, has written about this in his 2024 book *The Anxious Generation: How the rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness.*

Two factors are at play. Firstly, technologies are shaping children's minds. They now spend a large part of their lives in a virtual world rather than the real world. This causes distortions of perception, and inadequate face to face conversation and play. This may lead to loneliness and anxiety.

Secondly, children are being overly supervised and deprived of opportunities to play freely outdoors, to take risks and learn to be independent and responsible. In fact, they are lacking experiences for the development of resilience.

The Australian Hugh Mackay backs up these claims for Australia in his 2024 book *The Way we Are*. Loneliness and a lack of independence in childhood prevent the development of a socially adjusted adult.

This is a significant and widespread problem. On a social level, it is daunting. For ourselves, what can we personally do? We turned to an article (anonymous) entitled 'The Art of Developing a Beautiful Mind', where we are reminded that our mind is our greatest treasure. If we seek beauty, we will beautify our minds.

Beauty is freely available around us, for example in art, film, music, poetry, nature, reading, story, meditation, prayer, and in the BIble.

Paul's letter to the Philippians exhorts us:

'Fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise.'

In May we will turn to the spirituality of Michael Leunig. If you have a favourite Leunig cartoon, you might like to send it to me ([redacted]) and we can enjoy it together when we meet on Sunday May 17th, 5pm at 5 Vickery St., East Malvern.

LIBRARY NEWS
Sue McGrath / Faye Pattinson

Our most recent Book Chat on 16th April was held at Nirvana, 78 Nirvana Avenue, East Malvern and was as always, very successful, whilst enjoying a very tasty morning tea.

A wide variety of books was discussed including:

- Out in Nowhere by Fleur McDonald

- Au revoir by Mary Moody

- The Second Chance Convenience Store by Kim Ho-Yeon

Our next Book Chat will be on Thursday 16 July, in the Margaret McKinnon room at the Church at 10.30am.

All welcome with or without a book to share.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Lencie Harding

Treasurer, Jan Riches reported that the Fellowship Op Table held after Sunday's service on 12th April raised an outstanding $282.55. This amount included approximately $100 from the sale of Michael Williams' delicious jams.

A variety of goods were available for sale including fresh produce from Rev Terry and Elizabeth Trewavas, beautiful cards from Maree, the usual selection of homemade cakes, slices and biscuits and Michael Williams' 'new season' jams. Everything sold very quickly.

Jan has agreed to a $400 donation to support Uniting Prahran's Winter Breakfast Appeal.

A cheque has been posted to Uniting VicTas accompanied by a letter requesting the money be made available to Uniting Prahran.

Thank you to everyone who supported the Op Table by bringing and buying and for the generous financial donations.

As the second Sunday in May is Mother's Day, the next Fellowship Opportunity Table will be held on Sunday 17th May.

SAMMY STAMP
Lencie Harding

Jane received a large parcel of stamps from a lady from Bruce Rock in W.A.'s wheatbelt.
She writes:- *Hello, I have found it difficult to find an address specifically for stamps, so am sending them to your address to pass on. God bless in your ministry*. Most of the stamps were on paper and perfectly trimmed. Margaret Beaumont of Sammy Stamp will write and thank her.

I visited the Sammy Stamp volunteers with another delivery last month and they are delighted with all the donations from SCUC. They are calling Jane's

office a sub branch of Sammy Stamp. I was told that an old coin that was found among the late Alan Dilnot's collection, donated by Clare, is 2000 years old.

My Sammy Stamp box of trimmed and sorted stamps is empty again. Any donations of stamps will be gratefully accepted.

The following is Allan Clark's report for the May 2026 issue of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship magazine 'Net Work'.

There has been some movement at the Sammy Stamp station since the previous report with several new grants approved.

Updated sales to the end of March 2026 have reached about $16,186 compared to $6,812 same period last year. Quite a leap and based on the gold coin sales from a generous donor in the Williamstown area.

We have approved three grants so far this year

- Mission Liaison Group - $5,000 towards transport costs of charitable goods to our Pacific neighbours.
- Vanuatu Prevention of Blindness Project - $2,000 toward medical supplies, etc.
- Cranbourne Regional Uniting Church - $5,000 to cover the purchase of a pie warmer and microwave and food for the recent commencement of their drop-in centre as part of their Food Truck Ministry.

This amounts to $12,000 in grants so far this year.

At the request of the donor of the eight gold coins, within an extensive coin collection, featured in the March 2026 issue of Net Work, $2000 of the funds raised was forwarded with approval directly to St Stephen's Uniting Church which is the donor's home church.

Thank you all for the continuing flow of stamps, coins and other items, it is much appreciated.

Allan Clark
Convenor

SOUL GROUPS

What to these activities have in common?

- Book Chat
- Chinese with Zhuoran
- Coffee Catch-up
- Common Threads
- Ewing Choristers
- Fellowship Op Table
- Music Soirees
- Something for the Spirit
- Spirit Song choir
- Spirituality Workshop
- Taichi at St Andrew's

They are sites where we find sustenance; where we experience caring; where we grow our souls, and grow spiritually. They offer us the opportunity not only to share news, to learn and share skills, but also to share lessons in love and wisdom!

Let's celebrate our participation in these groups.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS!

SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOPS

The next get-together for John's "Awakening to the Living Universe" workshop will be on **Tuesday 5 May at 10am** followed by morning tea.

This session will explore the theme archetype of the Divine Child, as discussed in the Minister's Message above. It will be a gentle and reflective space to consider the "eternal youth" within us—and the ever-young life of God that continues to move through all things.

You would be very welcome to join us. No prior knowledge is needed—just a willingness to be curious. You will find your already open mind opened even further!

你好! (nǐ hǎo) – "Hello"!

CHINESE LANGUAGE CLASSES ARE BACK!

Classes have got off to a great start and Zhuoran has prepared some exciting material for us.

Even if you missed the first session, you will be welcome to join subsequent sessions. You will find the classes accessible and engaging.

Sessions are held on Friday afternoons, 4.00 to 5.30 pm, in the Margaret McKinnon Room. Next session will be Friday 8th May.

Among the students who came to the first session on 24 April was our Presbytery minister, the Rev Anneke Oppewal and her husband!

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27 May MUSIC SOIREE

Isabelle Roberts will host another musical soiree, "Listening to Music", at her home on Wednesday 27 May, 2.00 pm. The programme is wide-ranging and always includes some vocal music and a little sing-along! If you are interested in coming, please speak to Isabelle to reserve a place!

The gathering on 22 April was treated to Isabelle's musical response to her recent trip to Tasmania and its magnificent nature.

OTHER EVENTS

1 and 15 May TAICHI AT ST ANDREWS

Taichi classes at St Andrew's Gardiner are held on the first and third Friday of each month at 2.00 pm. It is great for your mental and physical serenity, and for forging links with a vibrant neighbouring congregation! Everyone welcome.

Astra Choir concert:

5pm, Sunday 17 May, Church of All Nations, Carlton

What times are these, where
A conversation about trees is almost a crime
Because it includes silence on so many atrocities!

(Bertolt Brecht, "To Generations Born After" 1939)

An eclectic programme centred on works by two Australian composers: Helen Gifford and George Dreyfus. Also, music by: Heinrich Schütz, Gustav Mahler, Max Reger, Alma Mahler, Stefan Wolpe, György Ligeti, Samir Odeh-Tamimi.

https://www.astramusic.org.au/2026-season

Glen Eira City Choir

Mozart's Requiem, Sancta Maria, Laudate Domine

Saturday 30 May, 2.30pm

St Andrew's Church, 228 New St, Brighton

Ormond Learning Hub presents

SERVICE AS MISSION

Over six weeks, 1 July to 5 August, with speakers including Professor Johannes Eurich and Dr Tanja Schmidt - world-leading experts on building connections between church and community service - we will explore what it means to step outside the church building and see God's mission in the world.

Venue: Ormond Uniting Church, 264 Booran Rd

Dates: Wednesdays, 1 July – 5 August 2026

Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Refreshments provided

Cost $75

Enquiries/Enrolments 0411 958 127 | office@ormond.unitingchurch.org.au

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MEMORIES TRIGGER MEMORIES

This month, we are grateful to Elizabeth and Marion, and to Grace for their contributions.

LOOKING BACK

Memories shared by Elizabeth Trewavas (McMaster) and Marion Connell (McMaster)

March 2016; Updated March 2026

Our association with Ewing started soon after the end of World War Two. Our parents, Norman and Margaret McMaster rented a house in Grant St, East Malvern. We attended the Church as a family and our parents took us to enrol in the Sunday School which was thriving. It was, of course, situated on the other side of Burke Rd in the cream brick building consisting of a hall, stage, and outer rooms at the side and rear. There was even a little chapel which could be used as required. Later, the Church also purchased the house situated on the corner of Burke Rd and Manning Rd.

The Sunday School was a large organization with a multitude of enthusiastic pupils. The Superintendent, Mr Moodie, was assisted by a team of teachers. The youngest children started in the kindergarten which was ably led by Mrs Cleverley, a bright, smiley lady who oozed kindness and care. On birthdays we enjoyed the privilege of sitting in a beautiful little cane and straw chair, the "birthday chair". Bringing coins for collection was an important routine and we loved to drop these into the wooden bowl as we sang "Hear the Pennies Dropping, listen to them fall, every one for Jesus, He shall have them all". After Kindergarten we graduated into the Primary Section run by Miss Hume. Marion remembers her reassuring those who might be running late...."Better late than never". It was about this time that Marion particularly remembers singing wholeheartedly the old inspirational songs of faith "Jesus Wants me for a Sunbeam to shine for Him each day. In every way try to please Him at home, at school, at play....." Other favourites were "Jesus Loves Me" and "Jesus Loves the Little Children". From here we graduated to the next level, Intermediate with Mr Moodie. Our attendance was very important as a roll was kept and a prize was awarded to those who achieved an acceptable tally of Sundays!

However, it was not all Bible study and discussion. We remember attending Sunday School picnics in the back of a van with a bread roll each to keep us going on the trip to Edithvale Beach. The month was October and we usually picked up our first dose (one of many) of sunburn and enjoyed foot races on the beach. Another highlight was the annual "Sacred Drama" written and produced by Rev Chris Goy. The Church was packed to overflowing and the Manse was taken over by excited children being dressed in various costumes which were sewn by a group of industrious ladies.

From Sunday School, at the age of fourteen, we moved into the youth group (PFA). One of the leaders was Margaret McKinnon, a very dedicated lady who generously devoted an endless amount of time to nurturing young people. Another, Leon Bates, is remembered as a vital contributor to the workings of the PFA. He quietly supported our activities with humility and dedication. We spent many happy occasions attending regular dances in the Hall, and took part in an annual Revue made up of sketches and

songs. We remember singing a duet of Negro Spirituals at one of these performances. An annual trip at 5 am to Heaney Park to watch the sunrise was another memory. In addition, regular discussion groups, district camps and revues provided an opportunity to explore our faith in conversation with others.

Elizabeth remembers teaching in the Sunday School where Alan Sandbach, David and Heather Jack were among her pupils. She also enjoyed singing in the Choir. Our friends during these years included Ross Heale, Keith and Judith Heale (Kiel), John and Janet Riches (Hayes) and Lencie Harding.

It was through the activities of the District PFA that Elizabeth met Terry. Terry was one of several who wrote original lyrics set to songs from well-known musicals for the District Revues. Elizabeth and Terry performed in these. At Ormond College in his final year of training for the ministry, Terry was appointed as a Student Assistant at Ewing. At a Parish concert during this year, he and Elizabeth attempted to perform a version of the “Gendarmes Duet “and “Has Anyone Seen my Ship?” only to collapse laughing on stage as they muddled the words. More recently we remember John Hill who has been joining us at Stonnington and was the Student Assistant Minister in the year prior to Terry's appointment in that role at Ewing.

Our mother had become actively involved in Church life at Ewing. She sang in the Choir and was a member of the Scottish Mothers' Union. She also participated enthusiastically in Scottish Dancing. She was a great sponge-maker and baked sponges for the annual fete winning prizes regularly.

Our father, Norman McMaster had been organist and choirmaster at Toorak Methodist Church from the age of fourteen. Our mother sang in the Choir there and so began their courtship! Already an accomplished pianist Dad decided to study pipe organ. This was assisted with a grant from the Government, post-World War Two. He had permission to practise on the Organ at Ewing and went on to become a regular organist there filling in when needed and regularly playing for the Family Service on the first Sunday of the month. He was also busy with a demanding day job and regular engagements as an accompanist in the evenings. When he retired at the age of sixty his daily routine involved walking to Ewing from Olive St where the family lived from 1950. Our home had been bought courtesy of a war service loan. Our father would practise the organ for several hours and then walk home. He filled in as organist at Ewing regularly and was now free to play for funerals. It was at one such funeral, in the Church at Serrell St, that he collapsed while playing the organ and died the same evening. He had just turned sixty-three. The year was 1982.

Elizabeth and Terry were married at Ewing in 1968. Marion and Douglas married, also at Ewing, in 1975 and settled in Mount Waverley.

Our mother involved herself in her Church which provided support and fellowship. She truly valued the wonderful friends who surrounded her with kindness and care. She was actively contributing to activities at Ewing until her death in 2009.

Not long after we were asked to participate in the Choir for the Centennial celebrations at Ewing. We have happily continued to enjoy sharing in the musical side of worship and feel fortunate to have met friends, old and new, within the congregation of the recently formed Stonnington Community Uniting Church. Terry joined the Choir for several years until he felt his voice was past its best. Doug prefers to share his musical talents by singing in the congregation.

Grace MacAllister solicited reminiscences from an old friend from the Epping Street Peace Church, Rob McDougall. The Epping Street Methodist Church amalgamated with Ewing Memorial Presbyterian Church in 1976, one year before the formation of the Uniting Church of Australia from the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. Grace, Keith and Rob McDougall were active in the Epping Street youth group. This letter recounts with warmth the activities and friendships of Grace and Keith’s youth.

Grace McAllister
Regis Camberwell,
1/11 Quinton Rd., Camberwell, Victoria 3124

Dear Grace,

Thank you for your recent envelope with the edition of the "1nSpire" publication. The article about Keith and the Easter Manger came at the right time, just before Easter. It put me in mind of Epping Street, as we always had the Easter Camp to go to. And we seemed to get good weather too. So, as an Easter Camp was my introduction to Epping Street I should let you know how that came about.

Coming to Australia from Paisley in Scotland, because of my elder brother's bad health, it was an awful jolt and my education suffered greatly. I went to Lloyd Street and I noticed how well fed all the kids were, compared to me coming from post wartime Scotland.

However, I did have several friends, who befriended me! Bill Spencer and his brother Jeff, who lived in Manning Road near the school.
Also, Len Rogan, who lived at the Burke Street end of Manning Road. Initially I went to Ewing for Sunday School but dropped out entirely as I felt I did not fit in. I think the Reverend Gow was his name and he became Moderator of the Presbyterian Church while I was attending Sunday School. So, when my school performance, at the new Oakleigh High School failed I was at a loose end, until my mother got me into Certificate of Art I at Caulfield Tech.

About that time Lennie, Bill and Jeff talked me into going to Epping Street Youth Club where we could play table tennis and badminton. So, I went along and met Frank Seppings. Frank as you know, had said that he could not afford to financially support the church, but he would be President of the Youth Club.
He was very successful and eventually I met his younger brother Vin, a charming, handsome, good-natured bloke.

In later years I would meet Vin in town on a Friday night and we would go for a beer at The Duke of Wellington's in Flinders Street, where Frank and another Public Servant would join us for the "6 O'Clock Swill". As an aside, I was later Vin's Best Man at his wedding.

Frank was a wonderful bloke and I have nearly remembered his wife's name. One time I went to Phillip Island with Des Roberts to see Frank who was building a holiday shack there. At the time he lived in Mooroolbark, right on what would be called the Maroondah Highway, but it was fairly narrow and bushy at the time.

As I often say, in every wedding there are casualties. And so it was when Lennie married Anne Govan, it became harder to keep up. So too with Jeff. Bill had another fate. But I remember with great affection the nights we spent in Len's Manning Road sleep out. It was very cosy with a lovely embossed tin ceiling, such as was fairly common for indoor walls and ceilings at the time. We played cards till all hours and drank very sparingly. One of the ardent players was Allan Knight, who had been in Bomber Command on the night raids over Germany. Allan loved the young company: he was a boarder at Len's house. Allan would arrive with 2 long neck bottles ofAbbott's Lager, and drink them both! Mr. and Mrs. Rogan were the salt of the earth and accepted Allan as one of the family. Allan overdosed one night, too many pills and some drink and he never woke up. It was a terrible shock to Mrs Rogan who went to wake him up in the morning. Another casualty. But I digress.

So, at Epping Street I met the Ministers, M. Gardner, Mr. Walklate, and more of the regular Church goers. I met Frank, Keith, Tom Phillips and many more you would know.

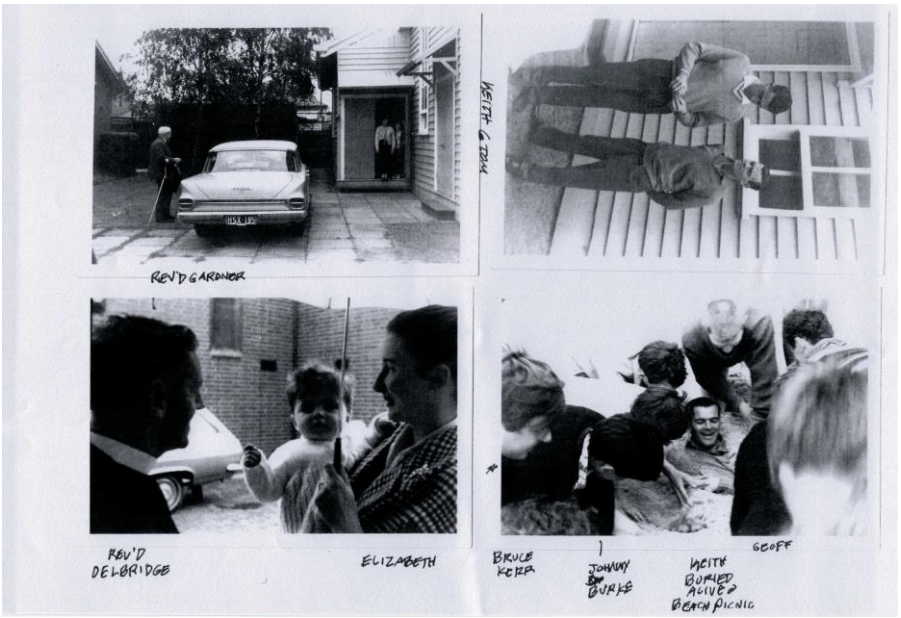
My Australian cousins, Geoff and Peter Hughes came along for the table tennis and the fellowship, and many more stories could be told.

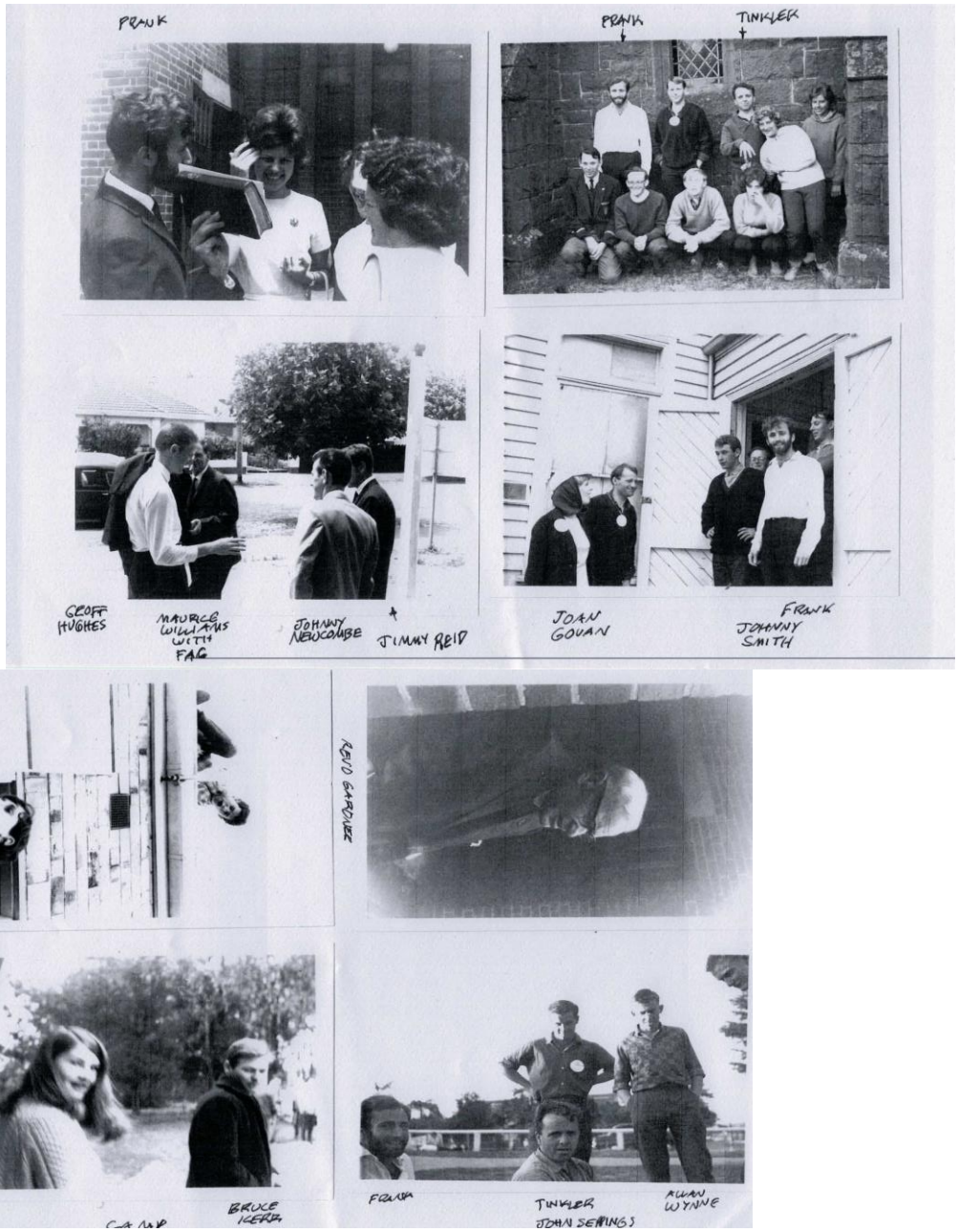
What happened to me was that eventually working in the media, I was often working late and on week-ends. Eventually in 1970 1 left my job at GTV9 and went to the UK to get more experience. I got that all right. I worked for commercial firms in London and Glasgow. Sometimes I would get a night train from Glasgow Central to go down to Birmingham England to stay with Frank for the week-end. Frank was at Birmingham University supervising the installation of their Electron Microscope. He had quite a good social life and wanted me to stay on when it was time to go back.

When I came back Epping Street was no more, the persons were dispersed or at Ewing. Most of my friends including Bruce Kerr and Bob Cother, Geoff, Jeff, Lennie, Johnny Smith (to Lorna Redman) even Peter Hughes were married! Even Frank in the UK was soon to be married!

I had to try and get established again in my industry and gradually the bonds dropped away. Later I joined the CMF (later the Army Reserve) and that occupied a lot of my time and interests, and I made new friends and fortunately for me, met Karen and we were married. The best decision I ever made! I hope the photos bring back a few happy memories, some of the names elude me and mostly the persons are lost to me. Hopefully this finds you and yours well and engaged in everything local, domestic and overseas. Thanks again for remembering me, keep well.

Rob & Karen McDougall, PO Box 240, Metung 3904. Vic., Australia. 4 April 2026





A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks to all for your contributions to the issue. We always welcome your letters, articles and photos. Special thanks to Lencie Harding for her diverse contributions.

The deadline for the **June 2026** edition of *InSpire* is **Monday, 25 May.** Articles should be emailed to the Editor, Alison Tokita, at [redacted].

CALENDAR MAY 2026

SUNDAY 3rd	**11 AM**	**EUCHARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH**
MONDAY 4th	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**
TUESDAY 5th	**10.00 AM**	**SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP** **"Awakening to the Living Universe"**
FRIDAY 8th	**4.00 PM**	**CHINESE CLASSES WITH ZHUORAN**
SUNDAY 10TH	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**
MONDAY 11th	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**
FRIDAY 15th	**4.00 PM**	**CHINESE CLASSES WITH ZHUORAN**
SUNDAY 17th	**10.30 AM** **5.00 PM**	**CHURCH SERVICE** **SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT**
MONDAY 18th	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**
TUESDAY 19th	**2.00 PM**	**CAFÉ CATCH UP AT MR SISTER** **CAFÉ 81 WAVERLEY ROAD**
FRIDAY 22nd	**4.00 PM**	**CHINESE CLASSES WITH ZHUORAN**
SUNDAY 24th	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**
MONDAY 25th	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**

WEDNESDAY 27th	**2.00 PM**	**ISABELLE ROBERTS MUSICAL SOIREE**
THURSDAY 28th	**10.00 AM**	**COMMON THREADS**
SUNDAY 31ST	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE FOLLOWED BY FEAST FOR FREEDOM LUNCH**