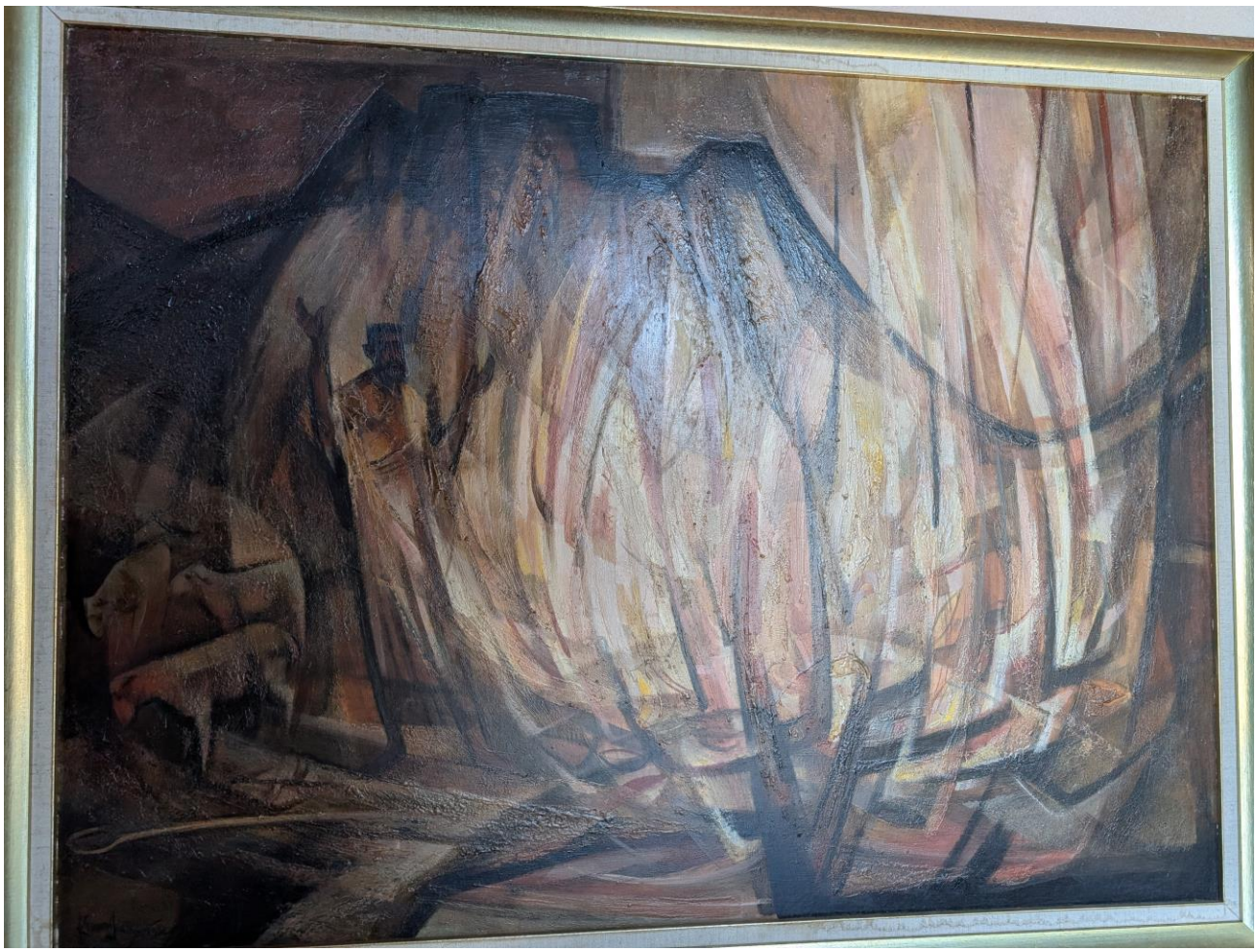
InSpire

NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 12, no 5 **June 2026**



Moses and the Burning Bush

This painting by Kenneth Jack (1924 – 2006) meets us when we enter the Narthex. Kenneth and his wife Betty were long-time members of the Ewing congregation. He was a lecturer in art at RMIT. Ian Jenkins' history of the Ewing Memorial Church notes his service on the Board of Management (1963 – 1971) and as an Elder (1972 – 1980).

InSpiring

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Looking Forward and Looking Back

As we move through the season after Pentecost, we find ourselves as a church in a reflective moment. We have celebrated the birth of the Church through the coming of the Spirit, and now we turn toward our AGM — that yearly gathering where we look honestly at where we have been and prayerfully toward where we are going.

In many ways, this movement of looking backward and forward reminds me of the figure of John the Evangelist.

John is a fascinating presence within the New Testament because he stands with one foot in memory and the other in possibility. In the Gospel of John, we encounter someone looking back over the life of Jesus with deep contemplation. Unlike the earlier gospels, John does not simply recount events. He reflects on their meaning. Decades later, after prayer, struggle, persecution and the growth of the early Church, John asks: *What was really happening among us in Jesus?*

And his answer is profound. Christ is not merely a teacher from the past, but the eternal Word woven into the fabric of creation itself — "the light that enlightens everyone." The memories of Jesus become, for John, a doorway into an ever-deepening understanding of God and reality.

Yet John did not only look backward.

In the Book of Revelation, he turns his gaze toward the future. Revelation is often misunderstood as a book of doom or prediction, but at its heart it is a book of hope and transformation. John looks at a troubled and uncertain world and still dares to imagine that the Spirit of God is leading creation somewhere new. The final vision is not destruction, but renewal: a new heaven, a new earth, and the holy city descending among humanity.

This is deeply important for us as a church community.

There is a temptation in every congregation to live only in memory — to treasure the past so much that we quietly resist the unfolding future. Equally, there is a temptation to chase novelty without honouring the wisdom and faithfulness that brought us here. John invites us into something more balanced and alive: a spirituality that remembers deeply *and* hopes courageously.

As we gather for our AGM this month, perhaps we can approach it not simply as a business meeting, but as a spiritual practice. We give thanks for those who built and sustained this community before us. We honour the ministries, relationships and acts of care that have shaped our shared life. But we also ask: *What is still unfolding among us?* What new forms of faith, compassion, creativity and understanding might the Spirit be drawing us toward?

Pentecost reminds us that the Church was born not as a museum, but as a living movement of the Spirit. The disciples themselves could not remain behind locked doors clinging only to memories of Jesus. The Spirit pushed them outward into new languages, new cultures and new understandings.

Perhaps our own faith journeys are meant to work the same way.

There are seasons where we look back and recognise where God has carried us. But there are also seasons where we are invited to trust that faith is not finished with us yet. Our understanding of God can deepen. Our compassion can widen. Our vision of Christ can evolve and unfold as we ourselves continue to grow.

John's life reminds us that mature faith is not static certainty. It is an ever-opening encounter with the living Christ — the one who was, and is, and is still to come.

John Power

CAFÉ CHURCH 31 MAY

Cafe Church
truly refreshing

Our guest will be the Rev Scott Holmes. Scott is an Anglican priest who has worked extensively with community groups educating for the prevention of family violence. He brings decades of reflection and experience in applying his Christian faith to the pressing social challenges we face.

AWAKENING TO THE LIVING UNIVERSE

The next session for this spirituality group will be held on Tuesday 2 June at 10.00am in the church. The theme is ***Shape-Shifting***. Transformation in Nature and Spirit Nature is full of astonishing shape-shifters: octopuses that mimic other creatures, insects that disguise themselves as leaves, animals that transform colour, form and behaviour in order to survive and evolve. But are humans shape-shifters too? In this month's Awakening to the Living Universe session, we will explore the evolutionary, psychological and spiritual dimensions of shape-shifting and what it means to develop the ability to change with the circumstances we find ourselves in.

A thoughtful and engaging morning of conversation, reflection, images and meditation. All welcome. No previous knowledge required.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FEAST FOR FREEDOM SUNDAY 31 MAY

This is a warm, welcoming meal designed to spark understanding and inspire action. It is an opportunity to be with friends, share a conversation, and help raise awareness that here in Australia, everyone deserves a seat at the table.

Thanks to Maria and Nadine and the Community Engagement Working Group for staging the Feast. We have already reached the maximum possible number of registrations, very exciting!

Attendees will be able to share recipes from around the world and listen to our guest speaker, a former asylum seeker from Iran.

This Feast for Freedom aims to raise money for the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre (ASRC) and to raise awareness of the needs of asylum seekers who are still seeking visas and work rights in Australia after many years in limbo. The ASRC provides food, shelter and health services for over 8,500 people seeking asylum who need support settling into Australia every year.
Around 700 people brought to Australia from off-shore detention in Nauru and Manus Island for urgent medical treatment over a decade ago are still waiting for a permanent resolution of their status. They remain on insecure, short-term visas or in community detention with nowhere else to go. The ASRC gives support to such people.

We invite you to support the ASRC with your donation (suggested donation $30.00) even if you cannot attend the Feast itself.

MEMORIES TRIGGER MEMORIES

This month, we are featuring Heather Carter.

Heather and her husband Dick started to come to Ewing Memorial Church in 1985 (during Rev Alan Wade's ministry), when they bought a house on the corner of Finch Street and Coppin Street. Ian Jenkin's Centenary History (1990) notes that Dick was on Church Council from 1986 to 1989. Their three children became involved in the church too. Heather was at the height of her career as a barrister. After a period in Perth, the association resumed in 1996, since then they have been key operatives in the congregation.

Hon Heather Carter in 2009

I am drawing on a 2009 published interview of Heather on her retirement (see details below), supplemented with my conversation with her for the following overview of her career.

Heather was born in Newcastle, one of three girls, who were all given opportunities for higher education and developed professional careers. Heather loved debating at school, where the need to be able to argue both sides, she said, is a good preparation for a lawyer among other things.

She had three children by the mid-1960s, and began studying law by correspondence at Sydney University. After the family moved to Melbourne in the early 70s, she began work as a solicitor at Anthony Rose in Albert Park, and later with Colin Lobb in Glen Waverley. She signed the Bar roll in 1978 and became a barrister, wearing a wig in court! She was the 45th woman ever to do so, and at that time there were just over a dozen women in active practice.

In the 2009 interview, Heather said: “It was lonely at first because I went from a busy life and practice, to reading which is a pretty solitary situation in many respects. I don’t mean by that that my two Masters didn’t assist, they did, but it was very different. I think fellow barristers generally didn’t make any distinction about gender.”

Note: “Master” is the mentor of a barrister, and as a “pupil”, she “reads” under the master, that is, studies the cases being represented.

Anyway, from then she specialized in family law and de facto relationships, although she also had a passion for criminal law, but for structural reasons you couldn’t do both. Both are what she called “people law”.

Heather did a lot of work on “Circuits”, especially the Bendigo Circuit, which meant spending a week away several times a year.

In her early years at the Bar, she was on “Foley’s List”; that is, Kevin Foley was her clerk and assigned cases to her. Heather revelled in the court work and has said that actors and barristers are very similar creatures, and that adrenalin is a key ingredient to their performance

Recalling the wrench caused by Dick’s transfer to Perth in the early 1990s, “I remember saying to my husband at the time that apart from him, it meant leaving everything I held dear in the world, you know, my children – they were grown by then, one with my very first grandchild, my home of which I was very fond and of course my work. So, the decision wasn’t hard to make, but the actual doing it was hard.”

In Perth, she established an independent practice as it was a somewhat different system from Victoria, and altogether a smaller Bar, and they didn’t have a clerking system: “There were no barrister’s clerks at that stage.” She also in Perth became a magistrate, a completely different work style: not only the need to “act judicially”, but there were no breaks between cases so more intensive.

In 1996, the Carters returned to Melbourne, and Heather came back to the Victorian Bar, recommencing work as a barrister, but not long after that she was invited to become a Family Court judge, and in 1998 was appointed to the Family Court, where she presided until her retirement in 2009.

The retirement interview honed in on her “enviable work ethic”. She said she always was up at 5.30, had a coffee and did a cryptic crossword, before going to work early for another coffee. She didn’t like to take work home.

Heather’s ethical integrity is indicated by the following quotation attributed to her on the Australian Women Lawyers website and reflects her Christian faith in practice:

"When delivering judgments, I often think of the story about Owen Dixon who said that the most important person in the court is the litigant who is going to lose. That person must leave the Court satisfied with the system, satisfied that his counsel and his case had fair treatment and every chance."

Carter, Heather - Biographical entry - Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens

Who would have guessed that Heather Carter, sitting quietly in church every Sunday, had such an illustrious judicial career fired not only by adrenalin but by a Christian faith ethic!

Heather had more active Ewing involvement after returning from Perth, though time was limited by the demands of her profession. Bronwyn taught at Sunday School Ewing, and granddaughter Stephanie attended under the supervision of Keith McAllister. She remembers helping at the Church fairs, when Dick held an opportunity stall.

She recalled emotionally her granddaughter Stephanie in a carol service leading the children in, singing Once in Royal David's City, it was so lovely it brought tears to her eyes.

Leonie Newnam's mother Amanda was recalled with warmth.

She evoked fond memories of Rev John Smith (minister from 2003 to 2008) and his wife Robyn who spearheaded the Ewing interest in Progressive Christianity, and with whom the Carters and another couple travelled to attend the Westar Institute in America. She "One of the problems I had with the church was intellectual", probably due to a Baptist Sunday School background. "It was empowering" and liberating to read and meet with inspiring luminaries such as John Shelby Spong, Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg. The local PCNV movement was fuelled by talks by "disenfranchised" and disillusioned ministers, usually Catholic.

Thank you, Heather, for sharing these memories and experiences! Indeed, InSpiring!

A comprehensive overview of Heather's legal career can be gained from an interview she gave on 24 July 2009.

The interview itself can be listened to here:

Heather Carter | Foleys List

The full transcript is here:

HeatherCarter_InterviewTranscript.pdf

"SACRED EDGE"

Chris and Anne Page represented PCNV at the Sacred Edge Festival in Queenscliff, May 1-3. Chris represented PCNV on a final panel on the last day.

It was a moving and interesting couple of days with heartfelt speakers, poetry, dance, art and wholesome food!

Greg was an excellent host and his presence has attracted people from diverse backgrounds. Dana sent her best wishes to everyone.

CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

Lencie Harding

What happens to our food and garden waste after our green wheelie bins are emptied each fortnight?

Stonnington Council provided an opportunity to find out during Compost Awareness Week (3-9 May 2026) by inviting residents to join a 'Follow your Waste Tour'.

On Friday 8th May, a group of thirteen residents and two Council staff met near Central Park and boarded the Stonnington Council Community bus for a trip to Van Schaik's Bio Gro facility in Dandenong South.

On arrival we were given a talk on the history of Bio Gro, the products and services it provides and a description of what we were going to see once we had put on hi-vis vests, hard hats and masks.

We climbed steep metal stairs to watch the waste travelling along a highly specialised sorting 'conveyor belt' that removed most of the contaminants such as plastic bags, nappies, packaged food and dog waste bags by forcing them over either side into bins.

A magnet collected any metal including forgotten garden tools.

The waste moved on to another conveyor belt where several members of staff manually removed the last of the contaminants. We were shown a huge bin destined for landfill which is filled with the contaminants every two hours.

A final process shreds the waste ready for transport to Bio Gro's Newbridge (near Bendigo) facility to be composted for 12-16 weeks. It is then ready for delivery as high quality compost and mulch for use on farms and vineyards.

I went home with two complimentary 5kg bags of 'Van Schaik's Dig in Compost'.

Seven Victorian councils employ Van Schaik's Bio Gro to process their food and garden waste to prevent it being buried in landfill where it produces the potent greenhouse gas methane.

NATIVE GARDEN RENEWAL

The Native Garden is being replanted!

Jeanette Baldwin, Maria and Alan Sandbach

Summer was not kind to the initial planting, done last August, despite assiduous watering by Jane and Dick, so Maria and Alan with their friend, horticulturalist Jeanette Baldwin have spent a few days recultivating and substantially replanting the garden. Among the problems were an infestation of garden chafer (*Phyllopertha horticola*) larvae who have been attacking the roots of the plants. A bagful of them were removed from their secluded underground hideaway. They looked like baby witchety grubs!

Looking forward to the new growth!

REPORTS

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT
Joyce Jenkin

The various music initiatives are going well, the Sunday services are well covered between the Ensemble, two organists and Errol on piano. The Ewing choristers are going from strength to strength. Spirit Song needs more participants and it was agreed that council would review its progress at our June meeting. Isabelle Robert's soirees are well attended.

The Feast for Freedom – at the tie of the meeting there were 56 registrations. The Peoples' Choir have made a $350 donation.

Richard Nelson has been working hard on matters related to our property and we thank him for all he does on our behalf.

54 Burke Rd – work is in progress to market the property for lease. Council has agreed that a request be lodged with the Presbytery Property Committee for approval for a draft lease agreement.

The Pastoral Care register has been revised and your elder will be in touch soon. Members of the congregation are advised that they are welcome to let their elder know any issues that they have in regard to their health; ability to attend services and also any other support they need.

As a matter of safety, evacuation training and drills will be conducted for stewards in the near future.

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT
Lorna Henry

Having Michael Leunig and his cartoons as the focus of our conversation in May was such an enjoyable experience! We were a small group, due to many regretful apologies, but the energy in the room was great.

We brought copies of our favourite cartoons and Leunig books, and the images were projected so we could all see them. Image by image we entered the worlds of Mr Curly, Vasco Pyjama, the Prayers, the curious images without words, and the often-biting political cartoons.

I had asked the overarching question, how close are the messages of Leunig's works to the gospel message? No specific answer was actually sought, but it was a background thought in viewing each one. Certainly, the mysterious, the wonderful and the beautiful are there, the awareness of something greater than us, as well as peace and the anti-war message, the call to slow down, to rest and to give thanks for the world and all its small blessings.

Our meeting in June will be of a difference kind, centred on an article suggested by Dick Carter, bringing us face to face with new scientific and biological research.

The article is entitled, *Longevity Research is overhyped, but this research really could change humanity. A new therapy has the potential to cure hundreds of diseases and even to reverse ageing.*

Reverse ageing? Such a theme raises questions of personal preference, as well as ethical ones dealing with the human body, and moral issues about the possible results, living very long lives, what this means for society, who pays, and whether overall we would be happier and better off. There will be much to talk about!

Our meeting will be on Sunday June 21st, 5.00pm at 5 Vickery St., East Malvern.
All are welcome to come, listen and offer your thoughts.

LIBRARY NEWS
Faye Pattinson

The next Book Chat will be held on Thursday 16th *July at 10.30am* in the Margaret McKinnon Room at the Church. All welcome with or without a book to share. Please feel free to come and share a cup of tea or coffee with us. Until then,

Happy Reading!

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Lencie Harding

Jan Riches reported that the Fellowship Op Table held after Sunday's service on 17th May raised $326.00. The sale of Michael Williams' delicious jams contributed at least $90 and with an additional $10 collected, Jan was able to bank $326.00.

Thank you to everyone who brings and buys and for the generous financial donations.

Treasurer Jan has decided to give a $300 donation to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) which will be doubled by other generous supporters of MSF. Special thanks to Jan for counting and banking the proceeds from Fellowship Opportunity Table sales.

REMINDER

Members of the congregation are reminded that a free vaccine for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is available from May 15 for Australians 75 years and over. Older adults are among those most at risk of severe RSV disease.

SAMMY STAMP
Lencie Harding

Two more deliveries were made to the Sammy Stamp volunteers last month. From all accounts Sammy is having a particularly good year from the sale of stamps and coins.
Thank you to the members of our congregation for any stamp donations which are much appreciated.

Thank you to Anne Don who collects stamp donations from members of the Murrumbeena UC congregation and brings them to the Archives for me to collect.

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

Sammy Stamp's helpers, of course, have other lives. Deb, as well as being a keen philatelist, cultivates beautiful Dahlias, bunches of which she generously gives to each of the volunteers in season.
Every autumn, Deb excuses herself from our company for a month or so, to compete and judge in the various Dahlia shows about Victoria and interstate at which she has been quite successful.
Recently, Deb was approached by Australia Post to act as a consultant to help design a set of three stamps depicting Dahlias. Release date, 19/05/2026.
Now to move to more mundane items.
To the end of April 2026, sales had reached about $20,009 (same month last year, $9,084.)
No more grant applications have been received or approved, so total grants approved so far this year remain at $12,000.
If any parish or organisation has a proposed or ongoing project that helps their community, please contact me on 9557 1008 to see if it fits the criteria. Thanks once again for the piles of Philatelic items, coins, etc. that have been pouring in lately. Much appreciated.

Roman Treasure Comes to Light

An ancient Roman coin, dated 268AD-272AD, has been donated to Sammy Stamp.
Emperor Claudius II is depicted on one side of the coin, and the minor Goddess Laetitia on the other. Laetitia is holding a laurel wreath and leaning on an anchor to represent the joy, prosperity and stability brought by the Emperor.
The estimated value of the coin is up to $30.

Allan Clark
Convenor

SIGNIFICANT BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Warmest congratulations to the following members who are celebrating milestone birthdays this month and last month!

May 8 Kim Ackroyd (60)
May 12 Judith Heale (80)
May 30 Lencie Harding (80) and Keith Heale (80)
June 6 Nadine Huissemans (60)
June13 Grace McAllister (94)
June 16 Joyce (80) and Isabelle Roberts (86)

These are the birthdays of which the editor of InSpire is aware. My apologies if someone has not been acknowledged! Also, if the information is inaccurate! Also, if I have disclosed information without permission! Mea culpa.

INDIGENOUS FOCUS

National Reconciliation Week takes place 27 May to 3 June, and it includes Sorry Day 26 May.

A significant landmark is the appointment of Judge Rose Falla, who commences as a Judge of the County Court having served as a Victorian Magistrate since January 2013.

Announcement of four new judicial appointments - County Court of Victoria

This is a milestone appointment of significance: Judge Falla was the first Aboriginal person

appointed a Magistrate in Victoria and is now the first Aboriginal person appointed a Judge of the County Court of Victoria. Judge Falla is a proud Wotjobaluk/Wemba Wemba/Mutti Mutti woman, and is the daughter of much respected Elder, the late Uncle Kevin Coombes.

Over the past 13 years, her Honour has sat as a Magistrate in the Criminal Division of the Magistrates' Court, hearing both indictable and summary matters, including sexual offences. In 2020, Judge Falla was appointed the inaugural Supervising Magistrate for Koori Justice, assuming responsibility for the Magistrates' Koori Courts statewide, Koori Family Violence, Koori VOCAT, implementation of inquest findings, and implementing the MCV Self-Determination plan.

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Looking ahead, we have NAIDOC Week with the intriguing theme of "50 Years of Deadly" coming up next month, 5-12 July.

你好! (nǐ hǎo) – "Hello"!

CHINESE CLASSES SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED

The fourth and final of Zhuoran's classes concluded on 22 May, with learning about shopping for food in Chinese and ordering food in a restaurant. In previous lessons we learnt basic introductions, numbers, colours, clothing and much more. We also became familiar with Chinese characters.

Hopefully, our Presbytery minister, Rev Anneke Oppewal and her husband Harmen, who left for a trip to China after the third class, have found the material useful!

Thank you Zhuoran for your excellent work, and thank you Michaela for attending all four classes!

Xièxie 谢谢！

27 May MUSIC SOIRÉE

Isabelle hosted another musical soirée at her home on Wednesday 27 May, 2.00 pm. The programme this time included some Japanese music, so you can guess who curated the programme!

Watch out to check when the next Music Soirée will be held! As always, please speak to Isabelle to reserve a place if you are interested in coming.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS!

SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP

"Awakening to the Living Universe"

The next workshop will be on **Tuesday 2 June at 10am** followed by morning tea. In this month's session, we will explore the evolutionary, psychological and spiritual dimensions of shape-shifting and what is means to develop the ability to change with the circumstances we find ourselves in.

A thoughtful and engaging morning of conversation, reflection, images and meditation. All welcome. No previous knowledge required.

OTHER EVENTS

Another opportunity to support asylum seekers, this concert at the Cabrini Chapel on 21 June will raise money for the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project.

5 and 19 June 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.

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

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 **July 2026** edition of *InSpire* is **Monday, 29 June.** Articles should be emailed to the Editor, Alison Tokita, at [redacted].

CALENDAR JUNE 2026

MONDAY 1ST	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**
TUESDAY 2ND	**10.00 AM**	**SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP** **"Awakening to the Living Universe"**
SUNDAY 7th	**11 AM**	**EUCHARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH**
MONDAY 8TH	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**
SUNDAY 14TH	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**
MONDAY 15TH	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**
TUESDAY 16th	**2.00 PM**	**CAFÉ CATCH UP AT MR SISTER** **CAFÉ 81 WAVERLEY ROAD**
SUNDAY 21ST	**10.30 AM** **5.00 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE FOLLOWED BY AGM** **SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT**
MONDAY 22ND	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**
THURSDAY 25th	**10.00 AM**	**COMMON THREADS**
SUNDAY 28TH	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**
MONDAY 29TH	**7.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG CHOIR**