InSpire

NEWSLETTER OF THE STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH

Vol. 12, no 7 **August 2026**

Christmas in July

InSpiring

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Held by More Than We See

In early July, Ella, Lilly and I holidayed in Krabi, Thailand, where I took this photograph of bright pink water lilies floating quietly on a shaded pond. Like many travellers, I was immediately drawn to the flowers. Their vivid colour seemed to leap from the dark water, demanding attention. It wasn't until I looked more closely at the photograph later that I realised the flowers were only part of the story.

What first catches the eye is the blossom. Yet the blossom exists because of everything around it.

The broad leaves gather sunlight and protect the flowers. The stems form an intricate web beneath the surface, carrying water and nutrients. Hidden roots anchor the whole plant in the mud below, unseen but indispensable. The dark water itself provides the environment in which life can flourish. Every part contributes to the beauty we notice.

It struck me that this is true of our own lives.

We often celebrate those moments when someone shines—an act of kindness, a creative achievement, an expression of courage or wisdom. Yet none of these emerge in isolation. Behind every flourishing life lies a network of relationships, encouragement, sacrifice and quiet faithfulness. Parents, teachers, friends, neighbours, communities and countless unnoticed moments have all played their part.

Nature reminds us that beauty is rarely an individual accomplishment. It is almost always the flowering of a larger pattern.

This is also something of what Jesus meant when he spoke of the vine and the branches. Life is shared. We belong before we achieve. We flourish because we participate in something greater than ourselves.

As I looked at the photograph, I found myself thinking that the flower is not the whole miracle. The miracle is the living pattern that makes the flower possible. Every leaf, every stem, every ray of sunlight and every hidden root contributes to the blossom's brief but breathtaking display.

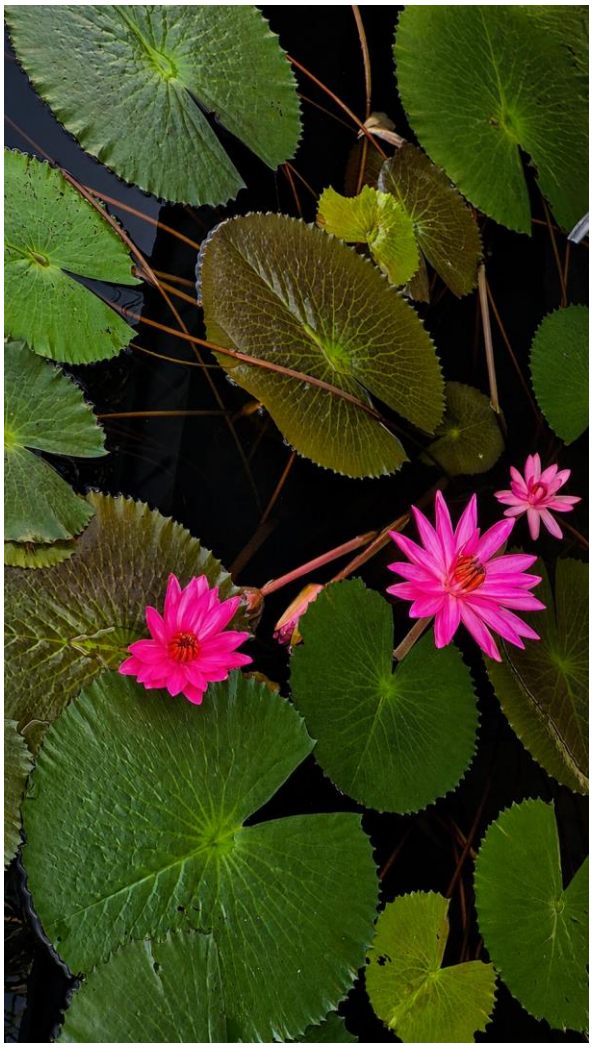
Our culture often teaches us to admire the individual. Nature invites us instead to admire the relationships that sustain the individual.

This is also one of the ways we come to know God.

Rather than imagining God as occasionally intervening from outside the world, I increasingly find myself recognising the sacred within the very patterns of life itself—in the countless relationships that nurture, support and bring new possibilities into being. God is present not only in the flower that captures our attention, but in the whole living tapestry from which the flower emerges.

The water lilies in Krabi became, for me, a quiet parable. They reminded me that every life is held within a larger ecology of love.

We all long for the day when we blossom, when our gifts become visible and our lives bear fruit. Yet nature reminds us that flowering is only the final chapter of a much longer story. Before the blossom comes the patient work of sending down roots into the mud, drawing nourishment from dark places, stretching quietly through the water towards the light, and allowing each new leaf to gather a little more energy for what is yet to come.



Much of the spiritual life is like that. There are seasons when little seems to be happening, when growth is hidden from view. Yet beneath the surface, character is being formed, wisdom is deepening, compassion is taking root, and God is quietly weaving together the conditions from which something beautiful can one day emerge.
Looking at these lilies, I am reminded not to rush the process. The blossom appears only when the plant is ready. Until then, every unseen day spent growing beneath the surface is just as holy as the day the flower finally opens to the sun.

John Power

AWAKENING TO THE LIVING UNIVERSE

Spirituality Workshop on Tuesday 4th August, 10.00am in the church, led by John Power.
The theme is **The Weaver: Holding the Patterns of Life.**
Nature is full of weavers. Birds weave nests. Caterpillars weave cocoons for transformation. Again and again, life creates patterns that support new life.
What might these natural weavers teach us about our own lives?
Together we will explore the **Weaver archetype**—the one who creates, holds and passes on life-giving patterns. Through conversation, reflection and the wisdom of the natural world, we will consider the habits, relationships and values we are weaving into our lives, our relationships and the wider world. Come and discover how even the smallest threads of wisdom, hope and compassion can become part of a pattern that echoes far beyond ourselves. **Everyone is warmly welcome.**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Our "Christmas in July" celebration on Saturday 25 July went off with a bang! Over 70 guests enjoyed a gourmet roast dinner with lots of accompaniments and sauces, prepared lovingly and expertly by Nadine and Sydney over two days of solid work.

The evening fulfilled its purpose of putting the spotlight on Avalon and its extraordinary work giving a “hand up” to homeless and other vulnerable people in our immediate East Malvern community and beyond.

Santa came with his jollity and cheer to set the tone and we enjoyed witty comic entertainment offered by Houston in one of his many guises. The buzz of conversation and laughter as guests feasted and imbibed attests to the conviviality of the occasion.

The raffle draws by Santa and Debbie brought many cheers and shouts of glee as the successful ones claimed their prizes, the most covetable ones being a French cooking class with Nadine and a $50 voucher donated by the Grazia restaurant.

Debbie spoke eloquently and ardently about the work of Avalon at Christmas time when people are typically most lonely. She was presented with a warm hand-crafted blanket to be given to a needy person.

When the guests moved to the church space for coffee and dessert, they enjoyed a wide array of sweets, including hot plum pudding and brandy sauce – a miracle! They were also treated to a short video about Avalon and were diverted by vocals from SpiritSong and a duet by Houston and Michael.

All eyes on the desserts table

Annabelle from Avalon and Hiro

The debonair Michael

Guests gave generously and raised a considerable sum to support Avalon.

Nadine's comments after the event

Thank you all for making last night feel like Christmas.

While Sydney and I had the privilege of preparing the meal, the evening was so much bigger than what happened in the kitchen.

A huge thank you to Maria, whose incredible organisation brought everything together—from coordinating everyone's roles to shopping and preparing the beautiful decorations well before the day even began.

What made the night truly special was the spontaneous generosity of our whole community, along with those who simply stepped in to help. Whether you were serving, washing dishes, packing everything away, decorating, or just lending a hand wherever it was needed, you all helped create something truly memorable.

The laughter, camaraderie, and willingness to work side by side in support of worthy causes like Avalon for the homeless made the evening about so much more than a meal.

It was about community, kindness, and making sure everyone felt welcomed, valued, and included.

Thank you to every single person who contributed in any way.

it was a wonderful evening.

Always in the thick of things:
Jo at Christmas in July

MUSIC MISSION

SCUC has received a generous grant of $5000.00 from the PWMU Cookbook Fund to support our Music Mission. Warmest thanks to Lencie who encouraged us to apply. The money will be used to grow the SpiritSong choir, and to put on the concerts mentioned below. The more traditional Ewing Choristers will also benefit.

SCUC envisages music as a missional pathway and a form of community outreach. Music, especially singing, is inherently spiritual and community building. Our music mission builds on our existing music activity related to worship.

SpiritSong as a community choir is an "in-between space" bridging community and church. It provides opportunities for people to sing "spiritual but not religious" songs.

To realize this form of community outreach, the grant will be used to recruit singers through both conventional publicity and digital social media, to buy and commission music for the choir, and to stage the concerts, as below.

PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

A series of concerts has been planned by Houston Dunleavy as part of our Music Mission. The first one, "Married Flutes", will be on Sunday 4 October at 3.00 pm.

Subsequent concerts

Sunday 1 November, Berta Bogrul, piano

Sunday 20 December, Annual Carol Service

Tuesday 22 December 7.30, Helen Lin, piano

MEMORIES TRIGGER MEMORIES

This month, we are featuring **Judith and Keith Heale.**

CONNECTIONS, CONNECTIONS!

I spent a delightful afternoon with Keith and Judith in their home with a resounding sound track of birdsong. The conversation was a counterpoint as each complemented the other with details, clarifications and corrections. A duet of two loving people.

Grounded and brought up in Malvern: Early church years

Keith grew up in Glendearg Grove, and Judith in Finch Street: "We both grew up in our grandparents' houses. We have not moved!" Judith went to Armadale Methodist Church in Kooyong Road, with her grandparents and parents. Keith went Malvern Presbyterian Church in Wattletree Rd, where he knew Barbara Castle (Wolstenholme) and her brothers. Keith used to go down to Ewing**,** because they had dances, and

knew Bess and Marion there. Judith followed after getting married. They were married in the Scotch Chapel by Rev Alec Fraser, who was well known and loved by both. Keith had known him at Scotch as chaplain and Judith knew him because he was a friend and patient of her GP father.

Keith – from electrical engineering to computer science

Keith studied engineering and Judy studied medicine, both at Melbourne University. They commuted to Uni every day together, Judy hopping on the train at Caulfield and at Malvern. (It turned out that Judith and I were both in the Melbourne Uni Choral Society in the late 60s.)

They got engaged in1971, when Keith finished engineering while Judy was still studying (she chips in: it was a long course, and I'm two years younger!) and married in 1972, when Judith was in her final year of medicine, and went to live in North Melbourne.

He started work seriously in1972, when he was offered a job in the IT area at Monash University and stayed there until retirement in 2000. In those days "a computer filled a whole room". He was developing computers and teaching programs for university students which were sold widely, even into America.

Keith developed programs to give all the engineering and science undergrads some tuition in writing computer programs in various languages. His work evolved into computer networking as Monash incorporated Caulfield, Peninsula, and later set up campuses in Malaysia, Prato, and more recently China and Indonesia. He also did a lot of lecturing.

Keith resigned in April 2000 and "jumped on a plane".

Judith: **"**As you know, we have no kids, so I decided in 2000 that I would take two of my nieces aged 13 and 15 to Europe." Keith decided to go with them. He later obtained consulting work at Monash and worked three or four days a week. That's when they bought their first dog, having always wanted a German Shepherd.

Judith's career and family

Judith was a GP like her father, Winston Kiel. He didn't want her to do medicine at first, saying he didn't think it was appropriate for a woman, despite the fact that his sister had done medicine, and his wife was a physio and so on: medicine "was in the family". Eventually she did some of her training in his practice since they were an accredited practice for teaching young GPs. Then they asked her to stay. She worked with her father for 19 years and continued the practice, called Wynloral, till she retired. "By the time you'd worked there for a while you knew everybody … and they're your friends. It's really wonderful. I loved it. And, of course, I was also a GP obstetrician, so I delivered a lot of the babies. So, that was another special thing."

Tennis

Both Keith and Judith played tennis at the Ewing tennis club. Their love of tennis began at the court in Judith's home, and Keith also played tennis at the Kiels' place every Saturday. Judith's father had played tennis on Saturday afternoons every week from the age of 18. "Malvern is like a village in the middle of a big city and because I worked in Malvern as well as living there, whenever I went shopping, I would know people in the street, or the person I was being served by and half the customers. They were my patients. I delivered Greg's youngest child Lisbet. I know a lot of those people and I've known them for a long time because we've interacted not just at Ewing, but in the community, I've often been their GP."

Retirement and Tanzania

Judith gave up the practice at 67, having always said she would retire between 65 and 70. **"**I loved my work but it's important to be responsible to your patients, so I retired." She then became involved with Kafika House (formerly known as The Plaster House) in Tanzania which she and Keith are visiting for the second time in September. The daughter of a patient who became an occupational therapist went as a volunteer to Tanzania where she learnt Swahili, then started going out to the Masai Villages to find children who were not getting treatment for

disabilities such as cleft lip and palate or clubfoot. These things can all be fixed and are not considered as disabled in Australia. Sarah set up a system where a team of surgeons, nurses, anaesthetists, one from Germany and another from the United States, came to operate on children for a week and then disappeared. Sarah was the rehab. She also had to find these children because the Masai believed they were cursed and they wouldn't feed them, or the mothers would hide their children. She's now helping about a thousand children a year.

Church involvement

Keith and Judith both served on Parish Council in the1980s, and Judith chaired at one stage. They also taught Sunday School. Judith felt very blessed: “I was involved with children in a lot of ways so I was lucky; I was delivering them, they were all my babies, and I'd see children every day.” The teaching was all done in the hall next to the church. The hall over the road was where PFA dances had been held, and had a lovely little chapel that was set up as a PFA Chapel.

Keith became involved in the Ensemble when Glenda Williams started it in 2000.

When Judith became Chair of Parish Council Keith gave her a book on how to run a meeting! Ian Jenkin was the minutes secretary. “Norm Henry was the chair, a wonderful chair. I remember it vividly.” Judith was of course very involved with the church community at a personal level. “I always had to remind people to tell Keith when they were pregnant because I couldn't! He was always the last person to know.”

When Bill Morgan (currently 111 years old!) served as supply minister, he welcomed Keith to the Parish Council and quietly said, *Don't let them get you down*!

Training dogs

After stepping off the council, “there was a point there where we did step back a little bit”. Keith had become very involved with the German Shepherd dog club which trains on Sunday mornings, and Judith had to join the classes to train their dog. Keith still came to the Family service and played clarinet with the Ensemble once a month.

Progressive Christianity

Both were involved in the church’s progressive Christianity, reading books and attending various seminars, including going to Sydney for the Common Dreams conference in 2007. Keith: “How does one Define God? The worst sort of person is the person who is absolutely certain of what they believe. It’s perfectly okay to disagree, to have doubts and to be wrestling with issues and beliefs.”

It is interesting that our new John keeps a lot of traditional aspects like the blessing and the sign of the cross and a clear liturgical framework. Judith: “It's quite delightful watching that, having gone to an Anglican school (Korowa)”. Keith: “It’s good to have some bones to hang your practices on.”

Finally, they agreed, the point is, how are you going to live your life, and live with yourself and your Society; it's very hard to live with your inanimate surroundings, as in climate change.

REMEMBERING EWING FOLK

Noel Hoitinga: a steadfast contribution

Elizabeth Noel Hoitinga, formerly Chapman, (1932-2023), served Ewing Memorial Uniting Church in many ways, including as Church Council Secretary. Her strength and commitment to the church community reflected a strong faith and sense of purpose, which we recall with gratitude and respect.

Recently I chatted with Noel’s eldest daughter, Kathy Cameron, who traced her mother’s deep religious conviction to the tragic and sudden loss of her husband while working in the remote Pacific island of Kiribati in 1967. Noel was left widowed with two daughters, Kathy aged 4 and Jane aged 1, a long way from home. The bereft family relocated next door to the Chapman family

home at 186 Wattletree Road, Malvern, living beside Noel's mother and brother. In due course, she found work as a teacher librarian at Korowa Anglican Girls' School; which the girls also attended.

In 1968 Noel returned to the Malvern Presbyterian Church of her youth where she found comfort, meaning and support. In 1977 upon Church Union, Noel left the Malvern (continuing) Presbyterian Church, together with others, and enthusiastically joined the congregation at Ewing Memorial Uniting Church.

Kathy recalls that the then Minister at Ewing, Alan Parton, was welcoming and inclusive and the Hoitinga family felt comfortable in a dynamic community which included a youth group and a tennis club. Jane thrived in the Church tennis team which was victorious in the local competition. The Church community was supportive and encouraging in all sorts of ways: for instance, both of Noel's daughters had their first casual jobs wrapping Easter bunnies at the chocolate factory where longstanding congregation member, Keith McAllister, was manager.

Kathy remembers that on Christmas Day the Church was so full it was difficult to find a proper seat! In this setting, Noel nurtured lifelong friendships, in particular with Dorothy Grenness, Margaret McKinnon and Elfriede Graesser.

Outside of Church, Noel applied her positive, well-organized attributes and took opportunities to extend herself, in particular volunteering to teach English as a second language.

Noel's talents were well applied, from working in the Church opportunity shop, serving on the Parish Council to running a fundraiser at the Church for Caulfield Hospital. Noel "did not like sitting still". Despite mobility issues which resulted in her move to MECWA in 2010, Noel continued to attend Church regularly. Her constant warm kindly smile, so well captured in the painting by her granddaughter, Zeth Cameron, is a lasting reminder of Noel's important, less tangible legacy.

MEMORIES OF EPPING ST METHODIST CHURCH

Sent to Grace McAllister by Brian Howe.

Brian Leslie Howe AO (born 28 January 1936) is a retired Australian politician and Uniting Church minister. He served as the eighth deputy prime minister of Australia and the deputy leader of the Labor Party from 1991 to 1995, under Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. He was a government minister continuously from 1983 to 1996, and a member of the House of Representatives from 1977 to 1996, representing the Division of Batman in Victoria. (Wikipedia)

I have at least one outstanding memory of the old Church as it was in the early 1950s. I was then a

member of the youth group, ably led by the McAllisters (Keith and Grace), and including a dozen or so teenagers, boys and one or two girls. We had to take it in turns to take out Elizabeth. A member of the group, John Metherall Lee (later director of music at Wesley College) was then a student at Wesley College who was putting together a jazz band, The Saints. John suggested that we might organize a dance in our Sunday School Hall, then very dilapidated although it had one rather superior room where John Frederick, then Principal of Wesley College, had helped form a Bible class. The school hall was adequate for Sunday School anniversaries but in bad shape. Keith McAllister as our youth leader was commissioned to persuade the Church authorities to give us permission. The Trustees were shocked knowing that Church policy was strongly anti-dancing on Church property, and given the dilapidated state of the hall. However, Keith promised that the hall would be suitably renovated by the youth group and surprisingly, given Methodist policy banning dancing on Church property, the Trustees agree; Keith must have been a powerful advocate.

Keith informed the youth group of the Trustees' decision and emphasized that it was agreed dependent of the young people carrying out their commitment to renovate the hall. How as we were proposing to use the space for a dance our commitment to renovate implied that the hall floor would be made suitable for dancing. As it turned out this was a major commitment involving "sanding smoothly" the floor of the old school building which was in very poor shape. Under McAllister leadership we were up to the ask and over several weekends and many nights the great Hall was sanded and with some decorative painting we were ready for the great event.

John Lee delivered The Saints who played this theme tune many times with some variations, and the hall was filled with music, very loud music. So much so, that there were many protests from the surrounding streets. But for our youth group the night was an outstanding success. All the work involved led to a great outcome and we were pleased not only with the success of the dance; it also helped establish our youth group as an important player in the Church. A number of us went on to serve as Ministers in the Uniting Church.

Brian Howe

REPORTS

STONNINGTON COMMUNITY UNITING CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Joyce Jenkin

The first order of business at the July Council meeting was the election of office bearers after the Annual meeting:

Dick Carter, Chair and Treasurer

Alison Tokita, Deputy Chair

Joyce Jenkin, Secretary

Sue McGrath Assistant Secretary

Fourteen people have registered to undertake training in the use of the defibrillator and St Johns have confirmed that it will take place at 10am on Wednesday, 2nd September.

Organisation of evacuation drills for stewards is in progress.

We have received a grant of $5,000 from the PWMU Cookbook fund for our music mission. How it will be used is still being decided.

The annual Carols service will be held on Sunday 20th December and the choirs that participated last year will be invited to participate again.

Concerts are being arranged by Houston Dunleavy for Sunday 4 October, Sunday 1 November, and Tuesday 22 December. Another will be scheduled for a Sunday in November, to be confirmed.

SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT
Lorna Henry

It was an article with a cute title which occupied our discussion in July.
Joyce Jenkin provided a newspaper article by Natalie Kyriakou entitled 'Can Humanity Survive? Ask a penguin what it thinks". (The author's ideas are more fully expressed in her book, 'Nature's Last Dance: Tales of Wonder in an Age of Extinction.')

The article lists several major developments and inventions with unprecedented potential for good, such as scientific and medical inventions, economic systems and the information revolution, which unfortunately have been partly misused, and therefore proved problematic for society. In too many cases profits have prevailed over human well-being outcomes, skewing their effects. The author suggests our society would benefit from emulating models from nature, in order to counter-balance the negative effects. For example: penguins protect each other from the bitter cold, trees and animals share their resources without allowing dominance by one kind, and elephants nurture vulnerable members of the herd with empathy.

"The future isn't just shaped through grand gestures, but in the little moments. In the fights we refuse to abandon, the status quo we refuse to accept, the times we choose empathy over apathy and courage over silence. The world doesn't have to be this way."

This month in August the focus will be on another book, 'Conversations with my Rabbi: Timeless Teachings for a Fractured World' by Rabbi Eli Schlanger and Nikki Goldstein. I looked for the book after reading a short review, and reading its back cover quote, I definitely wanted to read it.

Nikki:	What's your mission?
Rabbi Eli:	To bring light. What's yours?
Nikki:	To bring love.

Just before the publication of this book early this year, in December 2025 Rabbi Schlanger was killed in the shootings at Bondi Beach.
I look forward to sharing what his words have to say to us.

We'll meet again on Sunday August 16th, 5.00pm at [redacted]

Something for the Spirit is open to everyone. You are very welcome to join us!

LIBRARY NEWS
Faye Pattinson

The July meeting of Book Chat was well attended and we celebrated Jane's birthday with song and morning tea whilst discussing, as always, very interesting & varied books which were introduced by our members, including the following.

The Dutch House (Ann Patchett), The Recurring Decision (John Hearne), Tell Me Everything Elizabeth Strout), The Man Who Pays the Rent (Brendan O'Hea & Judi Dench), Buckeye (Patrick Ryan), Shipwreck Bay (Elspeth Procter), The First Anzacs (George Hulse and Jimmy Thomson) and Seeking Asylum (ASRC).

This last book is available in the Church Library which has now updated the two book cases in the Margaret McKinnon Room and we encourage everyone to peruse the shelves: borrowing is very easy; just fill in your name, the date, and your phone number in the supplied booklet which is located on the top shelf of the open bookcase in the corner of the room. If you have any questions Faye, Lorna, Jan or Sue would be happy to help.

Please note that Faye will be hosting our next meeting at Arcare Nirvana, Waverley Road East Malvern on **Thursday 10th September at 10.30 am.** Morning tea will be provided and all are welcome with or without a book to share.

Happy Reading!

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY TABLE

Lencie Harding

Jan Riches reported that the Op Table held after Sunday's service on 12th July raised $326. The sale of Michael Williams' jams and marmalade contributed at least $50 of the amount.

A special thank you to Maree Burnett for donating a number of beautiful notelet cards for sale.

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

The Op Table staff are having August off and all being well will run the next Op Table on Sunday 13th September.

SAMMY STAMP
Lencie Harding

Two visits were made to the Sammy Stamp volunteers at Trinity Brighton's hall last month. One to make a delivery of donated stamps which included quite a large number of high value stamps. The other followed an invitation to join the volunteers in celebrating Richard Hicks' birthday. A most delicious slice of cake was enjoyed by all, expertly sliced by Richard who was a chef before retirement.

Thank you to the members of our congregation who kindly save any stamps received for Sammy.

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

Well, whilst we are certainly in the wilds of winter, we still continue as busy beavers.
Sales up to 25/6/2025, have reached about $27,037. (To the end of June 2025 $15,656.)

We approved a grant of $5000 to the Uniting VicTas Winter Share Appeal, which is focusing on assisting homeless older women.
This brings to $17,000 in grants approved so far this year.

Please keep those stamps, philatelic items, coins, badges etc. flowing in. Sammy's helpers thank you for your continued support.

Allan Clark
Convenor

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Alison,

Thank you for applying for a $5000 grant for SCUC's Music Mission Project from UCAF Council's Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU) Cookbook Royalties Fund.

The UCAF Council members were pleased to approve the grant and the money is now available.

A report on the progress of the project would be appreciated and if possible, please an article for our UCAF magazine 'Net Work'.

This is the fourth grant approved for SCUC. The others were grants to benefit the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre ($5000), Avalon Centre (($2,500), and We are Mobilise ($2,500).

Since 1977/1978 the royalties from the sale of the PWMU Cookbook have been divided equally between the UCAF and the PWMU.

The UCAF has used over $600,000 to fund mission projects and an annual prize for the student who has excelled in Pastoral Studies at Pilgrim Theological College.

UCAF Council would like to encourage applications for a grant from other Uniting Churches.

Kind regards,

Lencie
Hon Sec.
UCAF Council
Vic.Tas Synod

A Book Review by Maria Sandbach

This is Happiness by Niall Williams
(Bloomsbury Publishing 2019; 380 pages)

The title of Niall Williams' novel: *This is Happiness* immediately arouses our curiosity, because what is happiness is a

question most of us contemplate, at least at a subconscious level, all our lives.

Written in the first person, and told through the eyes of seventeen-year-old Noe Crowe, Williams' writing is gentle, philosophical, poetic and intimate. The novel is set in the backward isolated Irish village of Faha in 1958, and meanders at a slow pace through constant misty rain, quirky characters and time-honoured rural traditions. Catholicism is accepted without question and daily life is punctuated by the rosary and the pub.

Nothing seems to happen, until Christy, a quirky middle-aged Irishman returns, ostensibly to negotiate the location of timber poles to facilitate the first transmission of electricity to the district. Christy boards with Noe's grandparents; and so becomes an unlikely mentor to their grandson, who has had a crisis of faith, resulting in him leaving the seminary. Both Christy and Noe have in common the fact they have run away from commitment, and have troubled hearts. They each find support in their mismatched friendship resulting in inner peace and an unexpected form of resolution coming home to Faha.

This is happiness is Christy's reflection, shared with Noe, as they wander through the Irish countryside on old rusty bikes. He reflects that happiness is indeed being alive to say it, whatever the heartache or regret one holds in the moment. This is a simple truth and a reminder to cherish and be grateful for the everyday: a wisdom that transcends time, and in this case the "switch on" with the arrival of electricity!

PERSONALS

Vale Barbara Wolstenholme

We were all saddened and shocked by the unexpected passing of Barbara on 18 July. She had seemed so lively and cheerful when we last saw her at church on the previous Sunday.

This was taken at the Feast for Freedom on 31 May. Even over dessert she was knitting!

And here she is at Common Threads on 25 June, with her usual cheeky smile.

A PRAYER FOR BARBARA

(offered by John at the service, 26 July)

"Many of you will have heard that our friend and fellow member, Barbara Wolstenholme, died last week. Barbara had made it clear that she did not wish to have a funeral service. We want to honour that wish, while also honouring her life by pausing together today to give thanks for her and to entrust her to God's loving care."

Loving God,

Today we pause to remember with gratitude the life of **Barbara**, our sister in faith and a member of this congregation.

We give thanks for the years she shared among us, for the quiet ways she became part of the life of this community, and for the unique story that only she could live.

Though Barbara chose not to have a funeral service, we recognise that love still seeks expression. So today, together, we entrust her to your eternal care with thankful hearts.

We remember that every life leaves its own pattern upon the world. Every kindness, every conversation, every act of courage and perseverance becomes part of the great weaving of life that continues beyond us. We give thanks for the ways Barbara's life became part of that living tapestry.

Comfort all who grieve her passing. Give peace to those who knew and loved her, and remind us that the bonds of love are not broken by death but are gathered into your eternal life.

As we give thanks for Barbara, teach us also to cherish one another while we can—to offer friendship generously, to notice those who may be lonely, and to become bearers of your compassionate presence in the world.

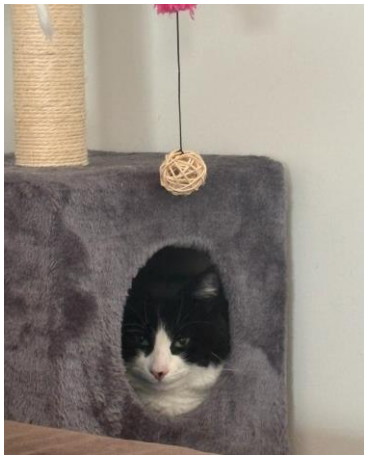
With gratitude for Barbara's life, and with hope in the love that holds all creation,
we commend her to you.

Amen.

BARBARA'S CAT

First Nadine, and then Sue responded to the call to take in Barbara's beloved MacDonald. Thank you both so much!

Here he is settling in, first at Nadine's, then at Sue's.



COFFEE CATCH-UP & COMMON THREADS

These gatherings were a bit sombre as we registered the sad news about Barbara. She was such a vibrant presence. Barbara was in her element in Common Threads, always knitting some new little project. How many of us have scarves, mittens, socks that she knitted for us?!

It was Errol Fernando's Birthday on July 28th. He turned 87 years young!

Happy belated birthday, Errol! Congratulations!

MORAL COMPASS

Grandmothers for Refugees and the push to get men stranded in PNG to Australia.

Did you know that 24 men are still trapped in Port Moresby from the over 2600 asylum seekers who were transported to PNG or Nauru? They cannot find jobs and will never earn enough money to live safely in Port Moresby. Seven of the men require immediate medical evacuation.

The Grandmothers are advocating to politicians urging their evacuation to Australia. They believe it is Australia's moral obligation and ethical responsibility to do so.

Learn more about Grandmothers for Refugees:

www.grandmothersforrefugees.org

or ask Margie, Joyce or Alison about joining!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS!

SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP

The next session of "Awakening to the Living Universe" will be held on **Tuesday 4 August at 10am**. Theme: The Weaver: Holding the Patterns of Life.

August 26 MUSIC SOIRÉE

Isabelle will host another musical soirée at her home on Wednesday 26 August, 2.00 pm.

This time, the programme will be curated by Houston, and will focus on twentieth century choral music.

As always, please speak to Isabelle to reserve a place if you are interested in coming.

CAFÉ CHURCH Sunday 30 August

Special guests will be our very own Ensemble discussing with John their views on music and spirituality.

PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

and other concerts

Sunday 4 October 2.30, “Married Flutes”

Sunday 1 November 2.30, Berta Bogrul, piano

Sunday 20 December 7.30, Annual Carol Service

Tuesday 22 December 7.30, Helen Lin, piano

OTHER EVENTS

7 and 21 August 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

A series of interactive workshops held over six Wednesdays, 1 July to 5 August.

I have attended four so far. At the first and third sessions the speaker was Professor Johannes Eurich of Heidelberg University, Germany. He spoke about the community outreach of his church in Heidelberg, the Evangelical Peace Parish. Clearly, they are well-endowed through the German taxation system which taxes citizens who identify as church-goers and funds many church activities. They have a large congregation and regularly hold confirmations and have a large body of volunteers as well as paid staff. Some of their activities are done in tandem with the City Council.

One colourful example was how a volunteer takes shut-ins on a ride around town for an hour in a rickshaw.

Areas of Focus of the Peace Church

Church Music	Children and Youth	All Generations	Seniors and Others
Spatzen Choir	Forest Meetup (Open Youth Group)	Boules	Senior Citizens' Group
Children's Choir	Basketball Hoop	Man-to-Man I/II/III	Neighborhood Assistance
Senior Children's Choir	Children's Church	Women's Group	Tea Time
Choir	Youth Group	Reading Club	Café Oase
Choir	Young Adults	Sewing Circle	Visiting Ministry West
Church Choir	Prisminis (Circus)	Knitting and Crochet Club	Visiting Service East
Consort 1685	Prisma (Circus)	Carpet Curling	Get Involved (Counseling)
Amaryllis	Prisma Ensemble (Circus)	Protestant Forum	Active in the Church Garden
Trombone Choir	Confirmation Class (3 groups)	Beer Garden (Summer)	

They have nine music groups, including six choirs!

On 15 July, Professor Eurich’s introduced an analytical model of the church. The church as an institution is the traditional hierarchical structure with clear dogma, set rituals and practices. The church as an organization is the modern corporatized entity that we are very familiar with. The church as a movement is flexible and innovative, generating new expressions from the grassroots it is active, not passive, willing to take risks in mission. Bearing in mind that Christianity began as a movement!

These workshops are definitely worth a visit.

Venue: Ormond Uniting Church, 264 Booran Rd

Dates of remaining sessions: Wednesday 29 July and 5 August.

Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

https://www.ormondunitingchurch.org/learning-hub.html

MELBOURNE MANDOLIN ORCHESTRA

A concert on the theme Multicultural Mandolins is planned for Sunday 13 September in the church.

This concert will feature music from a wide variety of cultures and countries and written or arranged for mandolin orchestra. Countries featured in this concert include Venezuela, Italy, Japan, America, Greece, Australia, Germany, Afghanistan, France and the Czech Republic. The orchestra will be conducted by Darryl Barron.

Tickets can be booked through Humanitix.

YUKARI ECHO

Sunday 25 October "Yukari Echo"

The Japanese Ladies Choir / Yukari Echo are preparing their 45th anniversary concert to be held in the church on Sunday 25 October. It will be a musical smorgasbord of Japanese and intercultural singing and instrumental music

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, Maria and Alan for their support.

The deadline for the **September 2026** edition of *InSpire* is **Sunday, 30 August.** Articles should be emailed to the Editor, Alison Tokita, at [redacted].

CALENDAR AUGUST 2026

SATURDAY 1ST	**12.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG REHEARSAL**
SUNDAY 2nd	**11 AM**	**EUCHARIST & COMMUNITY LUNCH**
TUESDAY 4TH	**10.00 AM**	**AWAKENING TO THE LIVING UNIVERSE SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP**
SATURDAY 8TH	**12.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG REHEARSAL**
SUNDAY 9th	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**
SATURDAY 15TH	**12.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG REHEARSAL**
SUNDAY 16th	**10.30 AM** **5.00 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE** **SOMETHING FOR THE SPIRIT**
TUESDAY 18th	**2.00 PM**	**CAFÉ CATCH UP**
SATURDAY 22ND	**12.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG REHEARSAL**
SUNDAY 23RD	**10.30 AM**	**CHURCH SERVICE**
WEDNESDAY 26TH	**2.00 PM**	**ISABELLE'S MUSICAL SOIREE**
THURSDAY 27TH	**10.00 AM**	**COMMON THREADS**
SATURDAY 29TH	**12.30 PM**	**SPIRITSONG REHEARSAL**
SUNDAY 30TH	**10.30 AM**	**CAFÉ CHURCH SERVICE**