

ART AT ARMADALE

By Bill Rush

Armadale Uniting Church is fortunate to have many of its spaces graced by the creative works of some of its members.

Lyn Ferguson has generously provided us with a number of her paintings works over the years. As well as being an accomplished painter herself, Lyn taught art to students at University High School.

In the worship area, Lyn's painting of the head of Christ on the Cross rests behind the pulpit. It is a theological complement to gold cross of the Resurrection on the centre drape. A red painting with symbols of the Sacrament of Holy Communion hangs by the organ console and three beautiful banners can be seen in the north transept. All these contribute meaningfully to our Sunday weekly worship.

In the main lobby is a semi-abstract painting of Lyn's, showing Christ and the disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. The sea looks somewhat turbulent so it can be read as Christ stilling the waves. It resonates with the sermon the Rev. Robin Yang gave at Fiona's induction service. (*Mustard Seed 21/August 2016*). Other paintings of Lyn's are in the Reta Berry Room (a watercolour seascape), a cheerful summer landscape in the small meeting room, and a painting of a ship which is in the minister's office.

All these works show a great variety of style, medium and subject matter that speak of Lyn's artistic talent. We are very grateful for all she has contributed to the beauty of our surroundings, and the spiritual life of the congregation.

Karel Reus Two of Karel's prizewinning photos are on display: one a portrait (in the small meeting room, the other, a composite study (just outside the door in the passage). Karel writes of his photographic life in these words:

'When I retired almost ten years ago at the age of sixty-nine, I asked myself as many do, how will I fill in this life-space once filled in by work. Now was the time to unleash the artist in me, but what sort of medium to use? Watercolour? Oils? Sculpture? Sketching? I decided finally on photography, bought myself a half-decent camera, bought some books (as I do), and joined a club. I soon discovered that the club was a great environment for improving technique – and I did improve a lot. However, I leaned towards the practice of photography-as-art, and that was almost frowned upon. I was regarded as being a little too highbrow for comfort. I lasted in the club environment for about seven years, but then lapsed into taking photographs mostly for my own pleasure.

I enjoy the shape of things; the geometry of the world, the capacity of the photograph to reveal what is often overlooked. I approach photography as a form of Zen meditation, concentrating on the small things, the essence of things; what some would refer to as the mind of God revealed in creation. I love the way that the practice of photography has made me see the world in a new way, framed if you like by the quest for beauty and meaning.

In recent years I have also discovered with the help of new friends the imagery of words in literature, but mostly in poetic expression. I have found that there can be a cross-over between images-in-words, and images-in-pictures. The mental exercise involved in placing and framing both sorts of image are rather similar and I am enjoying "the art" of finding and expressing images in both ways. I also enjoy the craft of it all; the placement of

elements, the highlighting and suppression, the framing and adjusting. I nearly always do my own printing, and delight in seeing the final image emerge from the printer as a once-only unique expression of soul.

(More of Karel's beautiful images can be discovered at www.kreusroads.com (Eds).

Pat Tolson

One of Pat's many paintings overlooks the space where we have morning tea. It is a romantic landscape entitled *Evensong* portraying a church, village green, and figures. Pat writes,

When I was a child, a painting of mine was exhibited in the Prahran Town Hall. Starting to paint in earnest in the early 1970's - and after gaining much knowledge from books in the Prahran Library - I began lessons from the Malvern and Brighton Art Societies before joining The Australian Guild of Realist Artists. The main themes of my work are children at play, landscapes and seascapes.

I have participated in a number of art shows - one of which was in the foyer of the Malvern Town Hall and opened by the Mayor. In 1974 one painting received a first at the Royal Melbourne Show and another came second at the Armadale Salvation Army. Other awards have followed.

Some 22 years ago I was asked to act as a volunteer instructor for a painting group at the Malvern Artists Society which is still going. I also tutor a watercolour group for residents at MECWA, which I find most rewarding. This is not as easy as painting with oils, because watercolours are quite difficult to control.

Other items of Interest.

The Light of the World.

A coloured lithograph of this famous 19th century painting by Holman Hunt, can be seen on the brick wall opposite the kitchen door. The original hangs in the side chapel of Keble College Oxford, where Kylie Crabbe, who ministered at Armadale UC until 2012, lived while undertaking her doctoral studies.

The artist began this picture when he was a little over 21 years old, but he did not complete it until he was 29. The reason was that he wanted to perfect the sky. He did not succeed in doing this until he took the picture with him to the Middle East and found the perfect dawn he was looking for near Bethlehem. When he was nearly 70 he painted a replica which hangs in St Paul's Cathedral, London. This replica is very much larger than the original, but the colouring and details are not so perfect.

Two lights are shown. The lantern is the light of conscience and the light around the head is the light of salvation. The door represents the human soul which cannot be opened from the outside. There is no handle on the door, and the rusty nails and hinges, overgrown with ivy, denote that the door has never been opened. The figure of Christ waits to be invited in. Under the picture, but not visible here, are words from Revelation 3:20 'Behold I stand at the door and knock'. A parable in paint.

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The Mosaic.

On the same wall is beautiful mosaic with the inscription 'In thankful remembrance of Leila Ida Lloyd, 2nd of January 1955. With Christ'. The subject matter is of the resurrection story, with the two wondering Marys peering into an empty tomb (Matt 28:1). It is a very well-crafted work but unfortunately the name of the artist is not known. The internet mentions a Leila Ida Lloyd (nee Brown) who was born in Maryborough in 1868. If, this were the same person, she would have been 87 when she died. This is an unusual name but whether it is the same person who was a member of the then Armadale Methodist Church is a matter for conjecture. Has anyone in the congregation more information?

The Abstract

This colourful and untitled abstract hangs on the south wall in the Reta Berry Room. It is signed *Irene 2013* - a participant of The Stables, an art therapy group attached to the Prahran Mission at that time. It is good to have this visual link with the Mission.

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