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# The Mustard Seed

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Armadale Uniting Church

*Issue 36, August 2021*

## Greetings from Fiona

We continue to live in challenging times. (Has there ever been a generation not challenged by challenging times? We can't be the first or only one – and ours will certainly not be the last...)

Globally, the COVID pandemic has yet to run its course.

In Australia, we are yet to be vaccinated in sufficient numbers to be able to open up international borders. Interstate borders are proving difficult enough to manage...

There continues to be great uncertainty, mistrust and fear - as well as frustration, outrage and anger. What to make of it all?

Some of you know I have been studying a Graduate Certificate in Professional Supervision. One of the key learnings for me has been about the 'skill of immediacy'. Attending to the 'here-and-now'. Being present to the present moment and what is going on in it.

Of course, it may be a hard and difficult moment, filled with confusion and apparent chaos. It may feel like an unbearable moment.

So there are choices about how to deal with such a moment.

We can freeze. We can be petrified.

We can run away. We can put our heads in the sand.

Or - with courage and resilience, we can look at what's going on in this difficult moment.

We can wonder.

Wonder is the core business of the church. And if we take a moment, we can see there is much to wonder at – even, perhaps especially, in these demanding times.

What is going on in this moment, in the world, in my heart?

Where is God? Who is God – in this moment, in the world, in my heart?

The invitation to wonder, here and now, is the work and the gift of Christian community to the world in this difficult, possibly unbearable, moment.

It always has been.

In these trying times, as Christians, we wonder about the God Who, in Jesus Christ, has come to our

Greetings from Fiona (cont)

broken world and fearful humanity and in this moment says  
'Come to me all who are weak and heavy laden – I will give you rest.'  
Matthew 11:28.

Could there be a better moment to hear this invitation for our lives - for our own sakes and for the sake of the world?

Peace, deep peace, in it all.

Fiona

## From the Editors

Recent months have, as Fiona states, continued to throw challenges our way, including a need to suspend in person services and revert to "Zoom" at times (sometimes at very short notice). But here we are with the August 2021 issue of *The Mustard Seed*.

Some of us were privileged to know Rev Dr Max Champion, and were saddened to hear of his sudden death recently. We reflect on his life on page 3.

Our other articles deal with a range of matters and we hope that you find them of interest.

– Bill and Graeme

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## The Lords Prayer in Latin

Pater noster, qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum. adveniat regnum tuum. fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo, et in terra. panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie. et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. et ne nos inducas in tentationem; sed libera nos a malo.

Sarum Missal and Margo and Wendy

# Rev Dr Max Champion

Max was the Minister at Armadale from 1992 until 2001. He was inducted on 30 January 1992. Those of us who knew him from that time were greatly saddened to learn of his sudden death on 18 June 2021.

Max was defined by his strong faith, integrity and compassion. His deep convictions and strongly held views weren't always in accord with the prevailing views within the Uniting Church in recent times, which led to some significant differences of opinion. However, Max was a man of deep integrity, scholarship and wisdom, and did not waver in his testimony of his faith and was greatly respected by each of his congregations. He wrote widely on various issues, in line with his commitment to the task of engaging Australian society and Western culture with the Gospel of Christ.

Max was brought up as a Methodist and was ordained in 1975. Before his service at Armadale, he served parishes at Natimuk, Hamilton Square NJ (USA), Ormond College and Parkville and Wodonga. After serving at Armadale for over 9 years, he served at St John's Mt Waverley and at North Essendon.

He gained a doctorate in the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer - a German martyr of World War 2, who often got a mention in his sermons! He gained this at Princeton Theological Seminary (New Jersey, USA). His thesis was on Bonhoeffer's understanding of the knowledge of God – examining how knowledge of God means we are “liberated from broken self-knowledge for self-knowledge grounded in forgiveness.”

In recent years, Max and Ruth took a great interest in Myanmar, and visited that country several times where Max lectured at one of the theological colleges. We were privileged to hear of their experiences there when they spoke to us at Armadale in February 2016.

A number of members from Armadale attended his moving funeral at North Essendon on 2 July 2021.



(left) Max and Ruth when speaking at Armadale on Myanmar in February 2016



# Gaye Storey

We asked Gaye to tell us a little about herself.....



*About 11 years ago my husband decided he'd had enough of city traffic. We bought in Dromana but I wanted to keep a presence in the city as it was too far to drive to Tullamarine / Sydney and back to Dromana in a day.*

*We didn't understand how very different the coastal real estate market was to the city: we should have been looking for housing in summer, not late autumn. We bought a purple house with orange carpet. It had a great view and importantly, wasn't too large, and had a lot of established citrus and olive trees.*

*I've become a slave to olive picking. You have to pick them when they are black, not purple. Each olive ripens at a different time to the one next to it. The harvest lasts for weeks. Then comes the rinsing, brining, and eventually the bottling. This year some of my family helped me pick the last of the harvest for communal oil bottling. The grapes had to be freshly picked, so backyards all over Melbourne provided thousands of tonnes and drove to CERES and similar venues. My 17 kilos has now become 2.5 litres of oil.*

*My background: I grew up in Melbourne inner suburbs until my mother, aunt, nana and I moved to Croydon. Croydon apple orchards were bulldozed for the new population and at 9 I walked alone to school. I found all the desolate unmade roads a bit unnerving after the cosy terraces of Abbotsford. Much to my family's surprise I liked Sunday School and went on to be baptised at the local Church of Christ. I think I was only sent off to Sunday School for them to have a peaceful morning.*

*After working overseas as a detail draughtswoman, I returned to Melbourne and met my late husband, Peter. With the proceeds of a \$1 quadrella, we had enough for a deposit for a house in Banole Avenue, East Prahran. Now, all these years later, I'm again living in East Prahran and a member of the Melbourne Racing Club, and back in a church community at Armadale.*

The more I think about it, the more I realise that there is nothing more artistic than to love God.  
Vincent van Gogh.



# Rev Deacon Margaret Black – 60 years of service

On 11 April 2021, we celebrated with Rev. Deacon Margaret Black the 60th anniversary of her commissioning as a deacon in (what is now) the UCA

We welcomed Rev. Duncan Macleod from Presbytery to recognise this significant occasion for Margaret and for the wider Church.



Margaret has written as follows ----

I called what I said on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2021, at Armadale Uniting Church 'A FULFILLED LIFE' after 60 years in ministry as a Deaconess and Deacon of both the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and the Uniting Church in Australia.

I am grateful to Rev. Fiona Winn and Armadale Church Council for organising and celebrating this milestone in my life, so memorably, by inviting Rev. Duncan Macleod, Presbytery Minister of the Port Phillip East Presbytery to present the certificate to me, and by Fiona presenting me with a lovely bunch of proteas and lucodendrens, and a book by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams, and many thanks to all who shared their good wishes with me on the day

I was also grateful that my sister, Anne Hammond and brother-in-law Don Hammond were able to be with me on the day, and I was ably supported by my loving husband Karel Reus.



Please turn the page for another picture



Rev Duncan Macleod made the presentation to Margaret

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## **A CREED**

from the United Church of Canada

**We are not alone,  
we live in God's world.  
We believe in God  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
The Word made flesh.  
To reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and in others  
by the Spirit.  
We trust in God.  
We are called to be the Church  
to celebrate God's presence  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.  
In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.  
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

# Around Armadale



We had Holy Communion on Easter Sunday (above), and our new sign on the front of the Church (right)



Geoff and John both celebrated their 90th birthday at a recent Men's Breakfast (left)

Turning God into some sort of celestial insurance policy is just mental.  
Justin Welby.



# Palm Sunday at Armadale



We were glad to worship with L'Arche on Palm Sunday, and to farewell them as they departed on their Holy Week pilgrimage around Victoria.

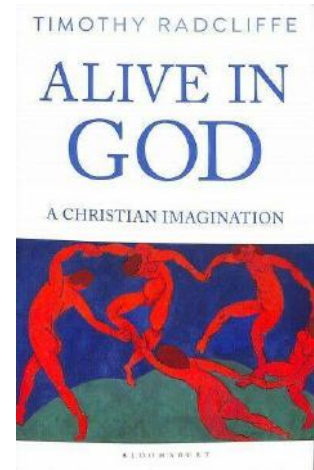




## Book Review

# ALIVE IN GOD: A CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION

Timothy Radcliffe



The author is a Catholic monk and author. The interest of this book for me is the topic of imagination. How, Radcliffe asks, can Christianity touch the imagination of our contemporaries when fewer and fewer people in the West identify as religious? Timothy Radcliffe argues we must show how everything we believe is an invitation to live fully. God says: 'I put before you, life and death: choose life'. Anyone who understands the beauty and messiness of human life – novelists, poets, filmmakers and so on – can be our allies whether they believe or not. The challenge is not today's secularism but its banality.

The book is crammed with insights. In making his case, many examples come naturally enough, from Radcliffe's own tradition, but he by no means neglects the wisdom of other Christians. His thoughts go along at breath-taking speed and are often backed up with numerous references to contemporary novels, poetry and movies. Now in his seventies, one gets the feeling that he understands how many of those much younger than himself have abandoned or ignore what they perceive to be a lifeless institution.

Because his writing is so wide-ranging it is hard to encapsulate it here, but the following extracts show something of his clear and engaging style:

"A parable is a firework that shoots up briefly in the dark and explodes, illuminating everything in a new way ... parables open a window in the small shed of our imagination and invite us to come out into God's fresh air". (pp 97-98).

"God delights in the unrepeatable being that each of us is. Even with people we love most, we only partially glimpse how they are unlike anyone else. Just in rare passing moments do we glimpse what God always sees, their uniqueness". (p 272).

"Worship draws us out of the suffocating bubble of our own being ... There are eucalypt trees that need forest fires to crack open their tough pods so that they may germinate. The fire of worship cracks us open so that we may be made fertile". (p344)

There are many quotes like these to grab the reader's own imagination and thinking.

Bill R

### Website

Don't forget to keep an eye on our website. It's at

<https://armadale.ucavictas.org.au/>

We try and keep it up-to-date, but we always welcome any feedback (you can send this to Graeme). We would also welcome any items of interest that you think might be suitable to be posted.

## **What does the Church Council of the Armadale Uniting Church do?**

Here is a short overview of the processes and tasks addressed by your Church Council.

- C.C. members are elected by the congregation at the AGM for a one to five year term. We currently meet on the third Wednesday of each month and extra ordinary meetings are scheduled as required.
- C. C. has six sitting members plus one ex-officio member and reserves the right to co-opt people for tasks, advice and or direction on subjects of importance as they arise.
- Meetings are opened with a reflective reading and prayer committing us to use our time wisely for the benefit of the Armadale Uniting Church congregation as well as the U.C.A. and the surrounding and broader communities.
- We make a commitment to **A Behavioural Covenant for Church Council**, see below.
- We acknowledge the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri First Nations people on whose country we meet and commit to act responsibly, inclusively and respectfully as Second Nations people.
- An Agenda with some standing entries and other timely items is followed and minutes of our deliberations are taken.
- Topics generally follow the list below:
  - Business arising
  - Minister's report and preaching plans
  - Congregational wellbeing and pastoral matters
  - Support for our minister
  - Financial matters
  - Keeping Children Safe commitment
  - Correspondence
  - Property maintenance
  - Tenancy and Hall Hire matters
  - Synod and Presbytery correspondence
  - Responses to world events/incidents
- Minutes of meetings, once confirmed, are displayed on the notice board in our "social gathering area", please read and treat in confidence.
- You are always welcome to bring matters of interest, ideas or concerns to the C.C., please contact a C.C. member.
- And you are extremely welcome to join and bring your talents to Church Council, please speak with one of the current members to find out what the process is.

### **A Behavioural Covenant for a Church Council.**

#### **Our Promises to God**

We promise to pray, alone and together, to thank God and to ask for God's help in our lives and in our work for our Church, and we promise to listen to God's answer to us.

#### **Our Promises to Our Church Family**

We promise to demonstrate our leadership and commitment to our Church by our example.

We promise to support our Church pastors and staff so that their efforts can be most productive.

We promise to try to discover what is best for our Church as a whole, not what may be best for us or for some small group in the Church.

## Our Promises to Each Other on the Church Council

We promise to respect and care for each other.

We promise to treat our time on Church Council as an opportunity to make an important gift to our Church.

We promise to listen with an open, non-judgmental mind to the words and ideas of the others in our Church and on the Church Council.

We promise to discuss, debate, and disagree openly in Church Council meetings, expressing ourselves as clearly and honestly as possible, so that we are certain that the Church Council understands our point of view.

We promise to support the final decision of the Church Council, whether it reflects our view or not.

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## WATCHMAKER AND HEROINE

**Cornelia, ‘Corrie’, ten Boom** was born on on 15 April 1892 and lived with her family above her father’s jewellery shop in Amsterdam, Netherlands. She trained there and became the first woman in the country to be licensed as a watchmaker. In May 1940, the Germans invaded the Netherlands and not long after they banned a club that Corrie had set up for teenage girls.

In May 1942, a well-dressed woman came to the Ten Booms with a suitcase in hand and told them that she was a Jew. She heard that the family had previously helped their Jewish neighbours and asked if they could help her also. Casper, the father, readily agreed she could stay with them, although the police headquarters was only half a block away. A devoted reader of the Old Testament, he believed that the Jews were indeed the ‘chosen people’ and said ‘in this household, God’s people are always welcome’. The family joined the Dutch underground and other Jews were welcomed. The Resistance built a secret room behind a false wall in Corrie’s bedroom. A buzzer was installed to warn the refugees of security sweeps.

There was enough room there to hide six people but food was a problem as everyone needed a ration card. Through her charitable work, Corrie remembered a family with a disabled daughter whose father was a civil servant and in charge of the local ration-card office. She went to his house one evening, and when he asked how many ration cards she needed, ‘I opened my mouth to say “Five” ten Boom wrote later, but the number that unexpectedly and astonishingly came out instead was “One hundred”. He quietly gave them to her and she provided ration cards to every Jew she met.

Corrie and her sister Betsie’s involvement in the resistance movement grew. Corrie oversaw a network of smuggling Jews to safe places, the secret room became a staging post, and the watchmaker’s shop a cover for the work. It is estimated that close to 800 Jews were saved in this way. Her brother Willem, a Dutch Reformed minister, had previously set up a nursing home for the elderly of all faiths. This became a refuge for Jews fleeing from Germany. Two Ten Boom nephews worked in resistance cells. Various other family members sheltered young men sought by the Nazis for forced labour.

On 28 February 1944, a Dutch informant told the Nazis about the Ten Boom’s work and on the



same day the whole family were arrested and sent to Scheveningen Prison. A group of six people hidden by the family remained undiscovered in the secret room. Ten days later the father, Casper, became ill and died in prison. Corrie and her sister were later transferred to the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany. Betsie died there in December 1944. Before she died she told Corrie, 'There is no pit that God is not deeper still'. Twelve days later, Corrie was released. Afterwards, she was told that her release was a clerical error. A week later, all the women in her age group had been sent to the gas chambers.

After the war, Corrie set up a rehabilitation centre for concentration camp survivors and also for Dutch who had collaborated with the Germans and were now jobless as a result. She later discovered that her nephew Kik had also died in a concentration camp. In 1946 she went to Germany where she met with and forgave two Germans - one of whom had been particularly cruel to Betsie. She travelled the world as a public speaker, appearing in over 60 countries. Corrie ten Boom died on her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday on April 15, 1983.

Information from *Wikipedia and the Holocaust Encyclopedia*.

### **SMILE PLEASE . . .**

A friend had his second dose of Astra Zeneca vaccine after which he experienced blurred vision on his way home. When he got home he rang the vaccination centre to ask if he should see a doctor or go to the Emergency Department. He was told to do neither but to go back to the vaccination centre and pick up his glasses.

To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved.

George Macdonald (Scottish parson and mystic)

### **Armadale Uniting Church**

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Regular service times: 9.30 am each Sunday, Holy Communion on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month.

Quiet Contemplation: 10 am each Wednesday.

Children's program: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month, during term time.

Usually on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday (where a month has 5 Sundays) we hold a combined service with other Uniting Churches in Stonnington, which are not always at Armadale. If the service is not at Armadale, no service at Armadale on that day. During January, the format of our services may vary.