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# The Mustard Seed

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Armadale Uniting Church

Issue 47, Easter 2025

## Lent, Journeys and the Future

**Rev Barbara Allen**

*'Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'*

(Joshua 1:9)

During Lent we have considered both Jesus's journey to the cross, and, in parallel, our own journey alongside him. Where have we travelled in the stories from Scripture? How do we travel today?

At times, it feels a little like some movies where there are flashbacks, then one is pushed forward to the present. It can feel a bit disjointed-like our own lives do on occasion.

Journeys. We have reflected upon the provisions we bring with us, including our faith compass, prayer, the Bible, faith ancestors and friends present day, as well as the baggage we leave at the foot of the cross, for Christ to deal with. Almost like putting out your hard rubbish for collection.

As we approach Easter, both physically and spiritually, dare I suggest that we bring the focus of travel, journey, or paths, to your next step, as you move from Armadale Uniting Church, to another faith community?

What will each of you take from this place of worship? Memories of course, but what other provisions does this place gift you? A building up of faith? An ability to enter into different forms of prayer or worship? Joy? Friendship? Some memories may be of personal sorrow, as you remember funerals. Hopefully you will remember not only the blessings of the deceased, but have felt supported by Christ, and by members of the Armadale UC congregation.

Think back to places you have left in the past. Schools. University. Work places. Family homes. Some of those moves would have been accompanied by grief, fear of the unknown, the future-but also (hopefully) blessings and memories of being enriched. Your family home might have been a haven of security and love. You may cherish memories of a loving teacher, or one who encouraged you to follow your dreams. A work place which taught you that you are stronger than you think you are! Or opened up doors to a different focus or career.

Lent, Journeys and the Future (continued).

What about at this church? Yes, the building is a place of beauty, its walls soaked in prayer. It has housed the faithful, the loving, the searching, the joyous, and the sad.

Our faith is not a road with all the lamps lit, with no shadows to scare us. We are commanded, in the most loving and gentle yet insistent and persistent way, to "Follow Me." Did you know how your life would unfold? Think back to being a child, lying in bed dreaming of what you were going to do when you became a grown up, when you could finally leave home. Some of those things may have happened, others have altered, as you and your interests changed. Looking back, I hope that you are amazed at your life and where it has taken you. This wonder is no less, indeed it is MORE when applied to your faith journey.

Oh, as much as I would love to stay here, and be your permanent minister, that is not to be. I pray that as you grieve for this place of worship, for all that it symbolizes-that you know that you do not walk away from here alone. All of the worship services, the times of fellowship, concerts, mission work, friendships-they have moulded you and will accompany you, as does Christ. In the words of Helen Keller: 'What we once enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose, for all that we love deeply becomes a part of us.'

The closing of the church does not mean failure. There is nothing that you have done, or didn't do, that led to this decision. You have been a faithful, beautiful faith community. You will make a mark wherever you go-how could you not? Your love is palpable. Your love has helped me in so many ways.

Easter is a time of new, unimagined beginnings. Resurrection. You are blessed. You will continue to be blessed. I know I have been blessed by the Armadale angels. You will be in my prayers, and forever in my heart.

Go forth, brave pilgrims, go out into the Resurrection light. Your hands are cradled by the risen Christ, He will lead the way.

*'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you...Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.'*  
(John 14: 27)

Amen

### **From the Editors**

After 47 issues this is the final appearance of *The Mustard Seed*. We hope it has helped strengthen the faith and unity of the congregation. The editors have very much enjoyed working together and we thank all who have made so many varied and interesting contributions to it over the years. And of course, we hope you will find something of interest in this issue!

– Bill and Graeme

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# Life After Armadale

Who would have thought?  
When I finished from my placement at Armadale, in October 2023,  
after seven wonderful years, all I knew was that it was time...  
Time to... What? Time for...What?  
Ray and I didn't know.  
The words for me were - availability...vulnerability...agility...  
What did these words, mean?  
I could never have imagined that they would mean a move to the Northern Territory  
and the mining town of Nhulunbuy: beautiful, edgy, challenging, unnerving...

This is not a permanent move.  
Save for the love of God in Christ, nothing is permanent.  
My husband's contract with an Aboriginal not-for-profit organisation is for two years.  
We see it as an unexpected opportunity which emerged from an openness to  
circumstance. All I knew was - it was time...  
And then, as the Quakers say - 'Way opens.'

So here we are...  
I can only say it is a privilege to be here.  
There are many hard questions. There are no easy answers.  
But for all Australians, wherever we live, when it comes to this land,  
there are many lessons to learn - if we are open and curious.

If you are interested, and it is a fascinating story, I would recommend  
Professor Clare Wright's award winning book 'Nhaku Dharuk - the Bark Petitions'.  
Or perhaps you might catch the documentary on SBS On Demand -  
'One Heart One Mind'?

Both excellent introductions to understanding the beauty and pain of Nhulunbuy – and  
the Church's involvement in its creation, both praiseworthy and not...

For myself, I'm just about to begin a short online introductory course  
to Yolgnu language and culture through Charles Darwin University.



There is a lot to learn...and unlearn...

As the time comes for significant change for you  
as a committed, faithful people of God,  
may you live bravely, hope fiercely, learn humbly  
Because, with God, there is always more – until there is beyond.  
There is life after Armadale.

May God bless you and keep you, inspire and encourage you, for all that lies ahead. Who  
would have thought? There is always more...

Peace, deep peace in it all.

My love and prayers.

Fiona

`God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform...` William Cowper



# Whither Armadale

As has been well communicated, Armadale Uniting Church will hold its final service on 4 May 2025.

This has not been an easy decision to make. The first service on the Kooyong Road site was in 1881 when a Sunday School was established here, followed by the building of the present Church (the foundation stone is dated May 1886). Hence Armadale has a long history, as set out in Dr Joy Parnaby's history (see <https://armadale.ucavictas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Parnaby-AUC-history.pdf>)

We've been fortunate in having the services of many great ministers over the years and most recently Rev Fiona Winn and Rev Barbara Allen have led us in worship, along with Ian Thomas and Karel Reus.

But although a number of people are actively involved with the Church, the realities are that we're ageing, our numbers are slowly declining and our finances are such that we can't guarantee adequate financial support for a ministry placement and other expenses for five years (even on a less than full-time basis).

It's in these circumstances that the Church Council, working with the Congregation and Presbytery, has determined that the final service at Armadale will be on 4 May.

Obviously a number of issues arise from this, in particular, what will happen to the property (especially the organ and memorabilia)? As was discussed at the Annual General Meeting on 23 March 2025, the Church Council is working through these issues, in the context that responsibility for the property is being transferred to Presbytery.

The various groups associated with the Church will each decide on their way forward, but hopefully will continue to operate, possibly in slightly modified forms.

The Church Council is receptive to comments and feedback, and would welcome any views, suggestions or concerns.

## Easter Services

Rev Barbara Alan will take our Palm Sunday service on 13 April, our Good Friday service on 18 April 2025 and our Easter Sunday service on 20 April 2025. All of these will be at 9.30 am.

All the details will be on our website ---

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

Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song.

Pope John-Paul 2



*“Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first”. (John 20: 3 – 4, Today’s English version.*

This painting is *The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulchre on the Morning of the Resurrection*. It is Eugène Burnand's best-known work and is regarded by many as the greatest Easter painting, even though Burnand depicts no women, no tomb, no gardener. Only the promise of what's to come.

Mary Magdalene had told Peter and John that Christ's grave was empty and that she did not know where the body had been taken. The disciples then hurry to the grave, their faces expressing deep concern as the first blush of dawn is tinting the clouds. At the time, they did not know that Christ would rise from the dead.

The painting is in the Musée d'Orsay, on the left bank of the Seine.

We are a seed patiently waiting in the earth – waiting to come up into the real world, the real waking. I suppose that our present life, looked back from there, will only seem a drowsy half-waking. We are here in the land of dreams. But a cock crow is coming.

C.S. Lewis

# CHATting WITH HUGH



## **Where were you born? Any brothers and sisters?**

I was born in Christchurch New Zealand in 1963. I have two younger sisters, Ruth and Hilary, and a younger brother, William (Bill).

## **Where did you go to school? Did you have a favourite subject?**

My family moved around a bit. Firstly we moved to Geelong where my father (Kevin) had a job with ALCOA at the Point Henry plant. There I attended Belmont Primary School and the first year and a half of CBC St Joseph's College in Newtown. Then we moved to Perth. I attended Applecross Senior High School from years 9 to 11. Finally we moved to Mount Waverley where I did my HSC at De La Salle in Malvern. I would not have been a brilliant student but perhaps my favourite subject was politics in HSC. I also took part in the HSC year production of "Everyman" where I was perhaps miscast in the role of "Good Deeds". It was hardly method acting but (inasmuch as you can) we won that year's inter-school competition as a result.

## **Which player/singer first attracted you to the guitar? Was it a particular tune or song?**

I had a maternal aunt who was a music teacher. She gave me a guitar when I was in grade four on a holiday in New Zealand. I sort of put it aside until HSC when it promised an alternative to studies, although somehow I achieved HSC. And in my HSC year there was the promise of "The Blues" which was perhaps some pseudo mystical calling more interesting than General Maths (although I passed that) and Economics (which I didn't).

During university I was drawn to extended solos of 70's jazz fusion, progressive sounds and Jimi Hendrix. Being a "serious musician" (defined as someone whose music or tastes were not popular) I decried the contemporary pop music of the eighties as being too synthesizer or "haircut" driven.

## **When did you first start taking guitar lessons? What other instrument might you have chosen?**

I have taken lessons sporadically and applied myself even more so. I took some lessons early in High School being exposed to Beatles and Neil Diamond but that was stopped to concentrate on year seven and eight at St Joseph's. I think during my twenties after graduation when my illness kicked in I was an extremely poor student underestimating the need to apply myself with poor concentration. I lasted about five years in the workforce after graduation before "having a gutful" and being formally diagnosed.

More recently having acquired some more high end guitars (particularly a red one – they go faster) I have applied myself more diligently and got a whole lot further. In terms of other instruments taken

up I could be a hat salesman but perhaps keyboards and mouth organ appeal.

**Do you sing in the shower?**

No! But that's just me

**Do you have a favourite hymn and/or song?**

My favourite hymn would have to be "Let me serve you" as it seems to espouse the basis of a community in Christ.

As a secular song I am rather enamoured of Adrian Belew's "She Is Not Dead". It is from his 1983 album "Twang Bar King" and apart from the Arabic or African seeming drum beat the emotion described seems very profound. It was very avant garde.

**What would be your favourite meal?**

I am no cook but my favourite recipe for "Fettucine Funghi" involves parting with \$25 in an Italian restaurant.

**Do you see a connection between God and music?**

There is an argument that music, whether classical or jazz helps to recognise profound emotions and perhaps the word of God within you. But it's a complex subject and probably varies from person to person.

**YOU ARE WELCOME FOR BREAKFAST!**

**Women's Breakfast:** On the *2nd Friday* of the month. Contact Margo Anderson for details 0447 035 355

**Men's Breakfast:** Usually on the first *Friday* of the month. Contact Graeme Harris for details 9504 8234

**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.

# Around Armadale



(left) April and Bill led us in our Ash Wednesday contemplation. April leads a Tuesday evening contmeplation group (below). At Men's Breakfast (bottom).



# A PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS

## *The Praises of God*

Lord God:

You alone are holy, You who work wonders!  
you are strong, you are great, the Most High,  
you are the almighty King,  
holy Father, King of heaven and earth.

Lord God: you are Three and you are One,  
you are goodness, all goodness,  
the highest Good, living and true.

You are love and charity, you are wisdom,  
you are humility, you are patience,  
you are beauty, you are sweetness,  
you are safety, you are rest you are joy,  
you are our hope and our delight,  
you are justice and moderation,  
you are all our wealth and riches overflowing.

You are beauty, you are gentleness,  
you are our shelter, our guard and defender,  
you are strength and refreshment,  
you are our hope, our faith, our love,  
you are our complete consolation,  
you are our life everlasting,  
great and wonderful Lord,  
all powerful God, merciful Saviour!

Amen.

# A Dead Man Named

## Jesus

Disbelief didn't begin with the Enlightenment or Darwinists – or with the twentieth century post-modernists. Only our modern hubris could believe that we today have finally advanced beyond the crude superstitions of illiterate peasants who in 33 AD were so gullible that they didn't know that corpses didn't rise from the dead. The first to disbelieve were those closest to Jesus.

When the women told the disciples that they had seen the risen Lord, they didn't believe it. Luke is even more blunt: 'they did not believe because their words seemed like nonsense'. Thomas became the most famous Doubter and in what might have been Jesus's last resurrection appearance there were still 'some who doubted'. At some point though, doubt and confusion gave way to deep-seated conviction – that Christ died, was buried, raised on the third day and appeared to many.

I believe the first believers partly because of their original disbelief and because of the price they paid to proclaim the resurrection.

But so what? Marcus Borg liked to ask. What difference would it make to your life if Jesus was *not raised*?

For Paul, the resurrection is partly personal. 'God will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body'. So we have something different than Plato's immortality of an immaterial soul.

More importantly, the resurrection is cosmic. Isaiah 65 imagines a new heaven and a new earth. Paul says that God in Christ 'will reconcile to himself *all things* in heaven and earth having made peace through the blood of the cross'. The *whole creation* says Paul will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. (Romans 8:21). Jesus 'tasted death for everyone' ... and rendered powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

In the radical opinion of the Yale historian Jaroslav Pelikan: 'If Christ is raised from the dead, nothing else matters. If he is not raised from the dead, nothing else matters'. In the end, Peter challenges each of us - 'judge for yourselves'. (Acts :19).

*Journey with Jesus March 2016*

*Dan Clendenin*

*Abridged 20 March 2016*

Sinners are attractive because they are loved, not because they are attractive.  
Martin Luther

# The Armadale Organ

Over the past 10 years we have enjoyed a weekly and varied diet of glorious organ music by our faithful and skilful organist Rowan Kidd. We thank God for his talent and the contribution he has made to our communal worship,

Obviously, with the likelihood of closure coming closer, concerns about what might happen to the organ are present, although its future will not be in our hands. However, here are some facts about the history of the Armadale organ from the website of the Victorian Society of Organists:

The instrument was built between 1912 and 1914 by Frederick Taylor of Hawthorn. This firm was recommended over other contenders by the Melbourne City Organist who considered Taylor's work to be more imaginative tonally than any of his contemporaries. Three additional stops were gifted and paid for anonymously. Metal pipework was supplied by Alfred Palmer and Sons, England. The casework was constructed in blackwood and the façade pipes finished in aluminium. The cost of the completed instrument was £660 and it was opened on 24 August, 1914. In 1937, several stops were replaced although it is unclear which ones. The organ was rebuilt by George Taylor and Sons in 1974. This is the only major example of a Taylor organ where the majority of the original pipework and tonal scheme survive. Its contemporary organs at St Clements, Mosman and the Presbyterian Church North Carlton are now in storage.

Armadale is the only place where Taylor's symphonic vision may currently be observed, albeit in an altered state.

There's also some information about the organ in the Easter 2011 issue of *The Mustard Seed*. See <https://armadale.ucavictas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sermons/2019/12/MS-Lent-2011-iss-6-for-ODT-cpd.pdf>



## Armadale Uniting Church

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ARMADALE Vic 3143

Minister: Vacant  
Organist: Rowan Kidd  
[ucarmadale@gmail.com](mailto:ucarmadale@gmail.com)

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

Regular service times: 9.30 am each Sunday, Holy Communion on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Final service 4 May 2025 at 2.30 pm.

Quiet Contemplation: 10 am each Wednesday (except January).

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.