
The Mustard Seed



Armadale Uniting Church

Edition 28 – Advent 2018

Greetings from Fiona

The band played on...and we hope they'll come back again!

Greetings.

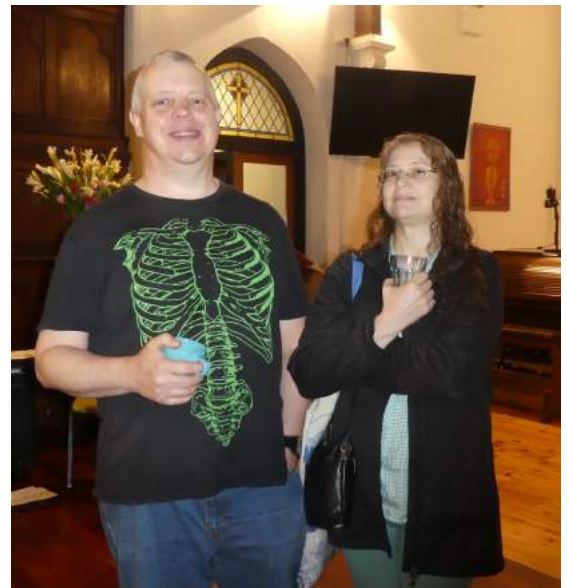
There are many joys in ministry. And one stand-out this year was the concert we held during Mental Health Week [on 9 October, ed] when one of our members, Hugh, brought two of his musician mates to play in the church. It was a wonderful evening – great music and a great vibe! Some members of L'Arche Melbourne* joined us. We were all up – or most of us were up! – dancing and singing and enjoying each other. There was some serious ribbon twirling and instrument shaking too. Pure joy. We had a great time!

In one of Jesus' parables he speaks of the crucial requirement for a really great party – go and ask in all the poor folk...the lame...the sick...the blind...the homeless...the disabled...those with mental health issues...all the ones who usually get left out. Ask them in – and you'll have the best party! They don't often get the chance to celebrate and party so they know how to make the most of it when they do!

Of course, in all honesty, who of us is not poor...lame...blind...disabled...struggling with our thoughts and fears and anxieties? Who of us does not feel left out and alone? Jesus says we're all invited to the best party!

One of the prayers one of our younger members wrote for us says: 'Have more to celebrate!' That's a good prayer – both an exhortation and a statement. In truth, no matter how hard the road before us, there is much to celebrate together.

And that's what we try to do, week by week. We gather together to celebrate the goodness and



From the editors...

This is our Advent issue, so we set out details of what we're doing during the season of Advent, and also in the first weeks of 2019 (all the details are on page 6). Please look at these carefully; there's lots on offer and your participation would be most welcome.

Our lead article is by Fiona tells us about the recent "café concert", and Heather recalls her experiences "Walking to Church".

There are some photos from Margaret and Karel's wedding and a review by Margo of a number of films at the Melbourne International Film Festival - plus a wide range of other items, all of which we hope will be of interest.

— Bill Rush and Graeme Harris

In this issue

From Fiona	1
Editorial	2
Walking to Church	3
Advent/Christmas/January services	6
Moltman on Christmas Joy	7
Amen	8
Cycling in Church	8
Wedding	9
Around Armadale	10
Where's the line to see Jesus	10
Melbourne International Film Festival	11
Cheryl's Date Cake	12

* * * * *

from page 1

astonishing love of God in Jesus Christ - not just for ourselves but for all people and for the whole creation; to be filled up and sent out to live our lives as an invitation to all sorts of folk to come and join the party.

Another year turns and once again, we find ourselves on the threshold of Advent - the most wonderful time of anticipation and expectation. We're getting ready to celebrate the coming of Jesus!

We sense something is near. We hope that whatever it is will happen soon. God has promised and the signs are that this great event is close. Now that is something to celebrate! So join us! Come and join the celebration this Advent, this Christmas.

*‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light:
those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them has light shined...
for a child has been born to us...’*

Isaiah 9: 2 and 6

*L' Arche is an international community of communities for people with and without intellectual disabilities.



Walking to Church

Heather Cameron



Thorsager Rundekirke, Jutland, Denmark

When I'm overseas, I love to visit churches. It is within their walls I pick up context of time and place better than any guidebook or history lesson ... although it is a time when the little rhymes we were given at school come in very handy:

*Willie, Willie, Harry, Ste, Harry, Dick, John, Harry III;
One, two, three Neds, Richard two, Harrys four, five, six... then who?
In 1492 Columbus sailed the Ocean Blue
In 1666 London Burnt like rotten sticks*

I also like to attend church services, and experience worship in as many countries as I can.

This is not always easy. In Denmark, for instance, although everyone is baptised, confirmed, married and farewelled in church (unless permission to the contrary is lodged with the appropriate authority), hardly anyone goes to church. *Italian for Beginners* is an excellent Danish film which highlights this. It makes it difficult if you are not the boss of where you are staying, transport and what is planned for the day.

I would have loved to attend the mediaeval Thorsager Rundekirke in Jutland, one of seven round churches in Denmark, but I was not able to be there on a Sunday. It was built around 1200 and lies probably on a pre-Christian sacrificial site to the God Thor. The original bricks can still be seen, but it has had to be largely restored. The interior has no distractions except its antiquity.

Although I visited many churches, of the two Sundays in Denmark, three in England and two in Malta this year, I only managed to attend two worship services.

One was in a little place called Chipping Hill, where my sister lives, part of the town of Witham in Essex. It lies on the Roman Road between Chelmsford and Colchester, dating back to Neolithic times, before the Romans, Saxons or William the Conqueror put their stamp on Britain.

In this case, it was a beautiful summer's day when I set off with two of my family down the hill towards the church of St Nicolas, established in the 1200s.

I hear the church bells ringing.

There is something quintessential about English country life, where people still walk to church on a Sunday morning. For me, it provides a pace that allows space



The former forge at Chipping Hill (at right)

and peace to enter. There is time to appreciate the fragrance and colour of roses and summer flowers, the stronger aroma of the dark green leaves of canopied trees. The hum of insects carrying out their daily nectar-gathering duties and tuneful birdsong accompanies us. There is no need for conversation.

We pass the old brick wall surrounding Witham Place, thick rich orange-red. I always need to feel the texture and wonder at its age as I go past. There are spots where it shows signs of deterioration, it may be crumbling but it's not giving in. In other places it bows out over the narrow footpath. I can imagine it making health and safety officers twitch.

We walk on down across the little one-way bridge over the River Chelmer and I enjoy catching its murmuring song. Beside it is the old mill house; sadly, the water wheel has been removed. As we ascend the hill to the church, we pass houses such as 'The Gables', Well House, Moat Farm. The old workhouse building is now converted into an attractive row of cottages with colourful flowers in window boxes. The forge is still there, but in the last ten years it has been converted into a house. Its newly black-stained weatherboards contrast agreeably with the red brick and white roughcast walls

There is a string of people ahead of us as we walk up to the heavy arched entrance to the church. We are greeted, handed the order of service. Walking in it is cool; a slightly musty smell greets us. To the left is the children's area, signed 'Messy Church'. The array of soft toys, books and colourful Lego bricks where children already happily play, seem incongruous in this old sanctuary. Worn stones on which the inscriptions are barely visible lead us to the gated pews.

We open the gate and seat ourselves, no mean feat for two six-foot sixers somehow folding themselves into the small space.

In the simple surroundings I feel a sense of timelessness seep into my being. I focus on the three, fine triptych-style stained-glass windows. Soon the procession takes its age-long form, the first shall be last and the last shall be first. A ribbon of white: cross bearer, candles, choir, servers, vergers, bible and finally the presiding clergy in their green stoles. The service is middle high. No bells or smells. It's all very much as I expect, a bit of cantoring, familiar hymns interspersed with modern songs and then the bible readings.

Age old tradition surprises me when the bible is processed towards the font at the back of the church, but we are slow to catch on. The two gentlemen in the pew in front of us hiss 'turn and face the bible like everyone else'. James, my nephew, has an indulgent grin on his face which I am sure annoyed them even further. I flush guiltily.

When it's time for communion, I look around to see what the form is. We seem to be holding up procedures, as the queue is slow to form. James whispers, 'Shall we go?'. I nod. He opens the gate and we troop out. Wrong. The gentlemen in front are infuriated. I remind myself that I believe in a forgiving God and go forward. Returning to my seat, I observe that it is the job of the vergers to open the gate of each



St Nicholas C of E, Chipping Hill (above), and view of altar (right)

individual pew to let the people out. All is revealed, and the sky has not fallen in.

These experiences add colour to a well-attended traditional service with good singing and a fine, well-played organ. The grumpy fellows did not speak to us, the Vicar was welcoming, and mentioned morning tea in the hall. The congregants gave us polite smiles, but there was no curiosity as to who we were or why we were there, which is unusual, especially in these days of dwindling numbers.

This is in contrast to the St Andrew's Scots Church, Valetta in Malta, where I attended worship earlier in the year.

It goes like this:



St Andrew's Scots Church, Valetta, Malta

Starting with the sea behind me I walk the 500 metres across the city peninsula, down, up and down the many steps and cobbled streets that signify Valetta, ending up with the sea in front of me. Excellent exercise, but not for the faint hearted. I am sure all the bells of the 25 churches are ringing across this small, 900 x 630 metres, vibrant city, calling all to worship.

The cafés and some of the gift shops along the way are open. People go about their business, perhaps with slightly less bustle than on week days.

I find the neo-gothic building, the first non-Catholic church in Malta, built in the mid 1800s. Here I am spotted and escorted to my seat with introductions along the way. Everyone is intrigued that I'm from Melbourne; they are full of questions; the inevitable, 'I have a niece who lives ...'. It is a starkly unadorned Presbyterian style church with dark furniture, blue carpet runners and two small stained-glass windows on which to contemplate.

The organist plays a brilliant introit. With little fuss, the Bible is carried in and the locum minister from Northampton in England appears, using a stick. A big man with a broad accent. I need to concentrate. He does not mince matters and asks what each of us had done of significance in respect of peace, refugees, climate change in the previous week. I could feel the ripple of discomfort as if we all need to shift in our seats slightly; nobody speaks.

He takes his stick and somehow negotiates his bulk to make a rickety ascent to the pulpit, which judging by the discordant creaking sound of the stairs, I would have avoided. Once safely in position, he gave an excellent and amusing sermon, giving us all plenty to think about. I'm intrigued by the organist who throughout the service plays what is clearly the wrong hymn music, making it very difficult to join in. No one bats an eyelid and we go along with it as best we can. The regulars are probably used to it. He finishes the service with a triumphant postlude.

I'm shepherded into morning tea – help yourself style. Someone has made a fruit cake; all very familiar. A gentleman explains to me that the organist has a mind of his own and plays the music he considers suitable for the hymn, and that I shouldn't worry about it (I'm not). Everyone is friendly, and I stay chatting for a while.

So, the old, beautiful church where mystery and tradition are important and British reserve is apparent alongside the informal, no frills, open door attitude of a strongly Anglo-Maltese Presbyterian congregation.

There is a place for both.

St Andrew's Scots Church, interior (right)



Advent/Christmas/January services

All services/activities at Kooyong Road (except 30 December, 6 and 27 January).

Saturday 1 December - AlterNativity, 10 am - 12 noon: an all-age activity morning to get us ready for the real reason for Christmas.

Advent Sunday, Sunday 2 December 2018: 9.30 am- Holy Communion.

Each Wednesday throughout the year (except January), including Advent , 10 am: Quiet contemplation. The Church is open, as usual, each Wednesday morning during Advent from 10 am for quiet contemplation (come when you can and go when you must).

Each Sunday during December: 9.30 am.

Christmas Eve , Monday 24 December: - 7.00 pm.

Christmas Day: - 9.30 am.

Sunday, 30 December : This is a “5th Sunday”, so we will be joining the other Stonnington Churches for a combined service at Toorak Uniting Church starting at 10.15 am.

Sunday, 6 January 2019: Holy Communion at Stonnington Community Church (“Ewing”), Burke Rd, East Malvern (cnr Coppin St), at 10.15 am.

Sunday 13 January 2019: 9.30 am at Kooyong Rd, Rev Sarah Tomlinson.

Sunday 20 January 2019: 9.30 am at Kooyong Rd, Karel Reus.

Sunday 27 January: Combined service with Armadale Baptist, at Armadale Baptist, Kooyong Rd, Armadale, at 10 am.

Sunday 3 February 2019: Covenant Service at Kooyong Rd, 9.30 am.



The former Prahran Mission was founded as an outreach of the Church, but now, more than 70 years later, even the position of a chaplain has ceased to exist. Rev Deacon Steve Crump (far left) was the last person to occupy this position.



Christmas 2018

Armadale Uniting Church

The characters of Christmas...

Where
is your hope?



Who
will bring peace?



What
gives you joy?



Why
must we love?



MOLTMANN ON CHRISTMAS JOY

'Christianity begins with Christmas. When Mary becomes pregnant she sings: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. (Luke 1:46-47)...

When her child is born in Bethlehem, the angels come from heaven to the shepherds in the fields with the announcement: Behold, I bring you good news of great joy ...

According to the thought of the Eastern Church, this birth takes place not in a manmade stable, but in a cave in the earth: the Child is Saviour of the earth as well. Jesus is born out of God's exuberant joy — God 'has pleasure' in him. God brings great joy to human beings, first of all to the solitary, freezing shepherds in the fields. That is why today we still sing joyful hymns all over the world today, and exchange gifts as a sign of our joy.

These excerpts are from The Living God and the Fullness of Life by Jurgen Moltmann, German theologian, (World Council of Churches) 2015

AMEN

How many times have we heard this word in church services? With many other congregations we conclude worship by singing it three times. We say it at the end of the Lord's Prayer and other prayers. In the past, it often came at the end of a hymn. At Communion, our blue book (Uniting in Worship) indicates that as bread and wine is offered, the recipient responds with *Amen*. It means more than signifying the end of something.

The word *Amen* has its roots in ancient Hebrew. It has been transmitted unchanged through the Aramaic language, to the early Greek-speaking church, then into Latin, then into English and other modern languages, without alteration. *Amen* occurs thirty times in the Hebrew Bible and over one hundred times in the New Testament. It is the very last word in the Bible.

The root Hebrew word means firm, confirmed, reliable, faithful, believe. When in worship we say *Amen*, we are indicating our firm agreement with what has been said or sung. Maybe a colloquial Australian translation might be 'fair dinkum'.

Jesus sometimes used the word *Amen* at the beginning of a definitive statement rather than at the end. In this case, some English versions translate the word as *Truly, or Verily*. As to singing it three times as a concluding doxology at the end of a service, there is a suggestion that the repetition began as an acknowledgement of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So this little word has very long usage and deep meaning. Scholars claim that it is the most widely used word in the whole of human history! When we say it we are connecting with hundreds of generations - in our present time, and stretching back to an ancient past.

Bill Rush

* * * * *

CYCLING IN CHURCH

The early Christians developed the 'church year' as a way of telling, learning and reliving the story of Jesus which stands at the heart of our faith. As they did so, they came to understand that it wasn't simply a matter of going round and round the same sequence and never getting anywhere. Think of a bicycle wheel; it goes round and round, but it is moving forward, not standing still. The same circuit around the hub of the wheel becomes part of the forward movement of the bicycle as a whole. So it is with the church's year. We go round the circuit: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost. The traditional Western churches sum all this up on Trinity Sunday, as we learn more deeply who our glorious God is. But the point of it all is that, in doing this, we are not simply going round and round the same topic and never getting anywhere. We are signing on as part of God's larger project, his plans for the whole creation to be renewed, so that (as the prophets said) the earth will be full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. In Jesus, God brought heaven and earth together. In his second coming, that joining together will be complete. That is the Advent hope.

(from the introduction to 'Advent for Everyone' by Tom Wright. SPCK 2017)

In this world, this demented inn in which there is absolutely no room for him at all, Christ came, uninvited.

Thomas Merton

Margaret and Karel's wedding

We were privileged to be invited to be present at Margaret and Karel's wedding on Saturday 15 September. Here are some photos.



Pat Tolson and Yvonne Smith were among the guests (right), and we were very happy that Dorothea Bogle was able to visit from Adelaide for the occasion (far right, with Yvonne)



Around Armadale



We joined St Andrews for worship on 29 September (Rev Fiona Winn with Rev Ayub Yahya)

We welcomed Sarah Tomlinson to lead us on 28 October. (below)



Where's the line to see Jesus?

A day in the life of Santa

the smell of pine needles
from the tree
covered in baubles

look at the line to see Santa -
a crowd of people
children wailing ...
the long wait ...

follow the red carpet
to the fake wooden throne
covered in tinsel

see the bright scarlet
of Santa in his suit -
a man dressed up -
hands gloved
long white beard
rosy hat

an old wrinkled face
bends down an ear
to hear
a child's shy whisper
her fears
her tears

he wipes them away
for now

This day in the life of God

the smell of hay
from the stable
covered in cobwebs

look at the line to see Jesus -
a few scruffy shepherds
the Child wailing
the weight of the world ...

follow the trail of cow pats
to the rough wooden "throne"
covered in straw

see the red face
of Jesus, strapped in cloth -
God dressed down -
hands bared, bound
bald baby head
no crown

a crinkled face
lends us His ear
to hear
His children's whispers
our fears
our tears

to wipe them away
for eternity

c. Janette Fernando

(Janette Fernando is Managing Editor of Poetica Christi, a Melbourne publishing house. In July this year, she led a successful Poetry Workshop at our church.)

Melbourne International Film Festival

Margo Anderson.



The Melbourne International Film Festival ran for two weeks in early August and we attended eight films, mostly at the Forum. This is a magnificent old ornate building right in the middle of the city and has a history of many incarnations.

The stairs there are almost vertical so imagine my apprehension at booking time, but by good fortune, or shrewd business acumen, a lift had been installed, so with this as encouragement and promise of a choc top at each sitting, we set forth to view.

Scary Mother was the first film, a dark miserable film of disconnect, depression, female ambition and hardship. Made in Estonia/Georgia imbued with cultural undertones; I am still not sure what the message was.

Sofia came next, a film from Qatar/France and looking at the current issue of pregnancy outside marriage which can carry a jail sentence of up to one year. Of course it happened and the effort that the wider family went to in order to “get away” with it and hide their shame was excruciating; this included paying a poor family to give up a son to carry the paternity! No-one was happy.

Donbass came from the Ukraine and it was extremely violent; surprisingly I slept through it so “no comment” is all I can give you.

A Woman Captured was a documentary filmed in Hungary and the film that moved me the most. This is the story of a woman enslaved into a cruel family, made to do all the housework, had nowhere of her own to sleep, was sent out to work in a factory every day and had her pay taken. Her teeth had been knocked out, she was beaten and humiliated dawn to dusk. She had lost her child as well. One day she walked out, once out she claimed back her name {they had taken that as well}, found a job and a flat and brought her child back. It was said that across the world an estimated 45 million people are currently enslaved!

Coldwar was next and whilst I am told it was brilliant, I cannot report the same. A French/English/Polish film about love in the time of Nazi terror, I just didn’t get the message and I think I slept a bit, again.

The Children Act will soon be on general release and I recommend it. English made and based on an Ian McEwan’s book of the same name, this brings up so many challenging issues, the ones with no one answer. A young man three months away from adulthood is dying from Leukaemia and his parents, adherents of Jehovah Witness, refuse to allow him to have blood transfusions to save his life. The court is asked to decide on his behalf and the judge does just that. Go and see it.

Speak Up is another documentary and looks at “Concours Eloquentia”, a French tournament of public speaking that has run for around 100 years. The competitors had to have had minimal public speaking experience and be young adults. It was a lot of fun and wit showing their teachers, their backgrounds, the value of public speaking and the personal development of these contenders. I felt uplifted and stayed awake.

The Other Side Of Everything was the last film/documentary seen, and took its toll on me for a number of reasons. This is a documentary about the long and arduous fight for civil rights and democracy in Serbia focussing on one woman’s determined and constant activism; her name is Srbijanka Turajlic an academic and politician. The film was made by Srbijanka’s daughter and centred, as metaphor, on the family apartment that was divided up and sealed off in 1947 and only reopened in the film. Commitment, courage, personal power, sacrifice and perseverance were all on display.

So what did I learn overall? The lift at the Forum is fantastic, Choc Tops are a treat, exposing yourself to difficult stories makes you grow, its O.K. to sleep at the movies, M.I.F.F. is great.

CHERYL'S DATE LOAF

We've often enjoyed Cheryl's date loaf at morning tea. Here's the recipe!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup chopped **dates**
- 1 teaspoon **baking soda**
- 1 cup **boiling water**
- 50 g **butter**, cubed
- 1 **egg**, beaten
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup **brown sugar**
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups **self raising flour**

DIRECTIONS

- Set oven at 180 degrees C or 350 degrees F.
- Combine dates and sodium bicarbonate in a mixing bowl.
- Pour in boiling water and mix. Let stand for 5 minutes.
- Add butter and mix until it melts.
- Add egg, sugar and flour and mix well.
- Place in a well greased loaf pan and bake for 45 minutes or until cooked.
- Turn out onto a cooling rack.



It is not only that we cannot understand Mary without seeing her as pointing to Christ, we cannot understand Christ without seeing his attention to Mary.

Rowan Williams

Armadale Uniting Church,
86A Kooyong Road (cnr Clarendon Street),
ARMADALE Vic 3143

Minister: Rev Fiona Winn
ucarmadale@gmail.com
0403 662 786

Organist: Rowan Kidd

www.armadale.unitingchurch.org.au

Regular service times: 9.30 am each Sunday, Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday each month.

Quiet Contemplation—10 am each Wednesday (except during January)

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

Usually on the 5th Sunday (where a month has 5 Sundays) we hold combined services with other Stonnington region Churches, sometimes instead of meeting at Armadale. During January, the format of our services may vary.