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# The Mustard Seed

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Armadale Uniting Church  
Issue 30, August 2019

## From the Editors

July marked the 3rd anniversary of Fiona's time with us, and what a blessed time this has been. As usual, this issue of *The Mustard Seed* starts with some thoughtful comments from her.

Heather caught up with Sarah Tomlinson who we met a little while back, and she reports on how Sarah is going at Castlemaine.

Dorothea updates us on her life in the Adelaide Hills, and Margo tells us about a road trip along the Silo Art Trail.

Bill tells us about his visit to "The Glass Church" on Jersey and we hear from Hugh about his guitars.

We've also got a poem by Karel, some pictures from some of our activities, and more.

– Bill and Graeme

## Contents

Greetings from Fiona	1
Editorial	1
Some things worth reflection	2
Easter morning 2019	3
A letter from Dorothea	4
The Big Koala and some Silos	5
Around Armadale	7
Slow Prayer	8
Everyone has a Story	9
The Guitar and Me	10
Happy Birthday Susanna	11
After Prayers, lie cold	12

## Greetings from Fiona

Prayer seems to be a fraught subject for Christians.

'I don't know how to pray'.

'I'm not very good at prayer'.

'I don't know what to say'.

I hear this kind of thing a lot – and I say this kind of thing myself.

Because I don't know how to pray either; I'm not very good at prayer; often I don't know what to say...

I am a beginner. I'm learning. I'm practising and trying to get better...

If I know anything about prayer it is that it is mystery; it is about a relationship – with God – and that for it to be true prayer – which suggests there maybe something that is 'false' prayer – it must be honest. You cannot lie in prayer – perhaps that's why it is so hard?.

Friends with intellectual disabilities have taught me – prayer doesn't have to be right – but it does have to be warm...from the heart...to do with our deepest truest selves – which can be confronting, because there is nowhere to hide in prayer.

For some people that is thrilling and liberating; for others truly terrifying.

Which would you say is true of yourself?

The disciples saw something in the way that Jesus prayed that they wanted for their own lives. What did they see? Possibly not what he

actually did in prayer – though they saw he went off by himself and prayed - but they saw what the result of his prayer was, in how he lived his life and faced his death; how he was with those he encountered – the powerful and the poor; how he challenged the status quo and celebrated with ordinary people. And they wanted to be like that, be like him too. Today we are his disciples...

Below is a poem by George Herbert an English Anglican priest from the early 1600s. There are no sentences; just phrases as he tries to put into words what he thinks about, his experience of, prayer. Choose one or two and sit and wonder about them. Which phrase or phrases might you choose to describe prayer in your life?

## Prayer by George Herbert

Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,  
God's breath in man returning to his birth,  
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,  
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth  
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,  
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,  
The six-days world transposing in an hour,  
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;  
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,  
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,  
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,  
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,  
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,  
The land of spices; something understood.  
'Lord teach us how to pray...' (Luke 11:1)

### **Some things worth reflection ...** April Blackwell

- Life is not fair, but it is still good.
- Live each day as the present and make it beautiful.
- I look to the future which is where I will spend the rest of my life.
- Heal the past, live in the present, dream the future.
- Don't count the days, make the days count.
- Learn to listen. Opportunity knocks very softly sometimes.
- You are too blessed to be stressed.

# Easter morning 2019

Heather Cameron



We arrive in a straggle, myself, five grandchildren and their mums, at the lovely old red brick ex-Presbyterian Castlemaine Uniting Church. As you know, this is where Sarah Tomlinson is now installed as the minister.

We are given a warm country UCA style welcome and shown to a pew which we easily fill. People say, 'hello, how lovely that you have come to worship with us today'. They are a friendly congregation. There is a homely buzz of conversation in the church. The sun streams through the stained-glass windows emphasising the mellow colour of the timber and the fine organ.

I spot Sarah who is chatting 'in the pews', already at home. I go over to re-introduce myself and she gives me a spontaneous hug.

There is a large, bare cross lying across the Sanctuary. The scene is set, the service begins. Christ is risen! - He is risen indeed! Halleluia! Sarah has a gladness about her that cannot be ignored, it is infectious. She conducts the service with quiet confidence and grace. We sing with gusto 'Thine be the Glory' accompanied by the organ and a trombonist, to the delight of the children.

The children are invited to join with the activities group. There is hardly a sound, they are so intent on their tasks. They return later, each with model hot air balloons which flew, spreading messages of Easter, very pleased with their efforts.

Sarah preaches well, acknowledging that people have a range of understandings about the resurrection, but that it is clear that 'something amazing happened' on that day all those years ago. After the sermon, everyone helped to weave fresh flowers around the branches, a lovely sign of new life and then joyfully sing Halle, Halle, Halle. We finish by singing 'Christ the Lord is risen today'.

One daughter in law, a Catholic, said she had really enjoyed the worship, the beautiful prayers, the message and the relaxed atmosphere of the church. Another, brought up in the UCA, said 'I really like the way they do things in the Uniting Church, it feels right. My daughter was also happy to be within the hallowed walls. The children said they'd had a great time.



I was fortunate to find I knew three families, all from Melbourne, and discovered that I knew Sarah's husband, Alex, who lived at Ormond College when I worked there – quite a coincidence. It was great to experience worship with Sarah. She is well-supported in her role by an active congregation. She sent her best wishes to all at Armadale.

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# A letter from Dorothea

Dear Fiona and Armadale congregation,

Good to be back in touch as I write this letter to catch you all up with recent happenings in my world here in The Hills!

Several months ago, we moved to a retirement village locally. Andrew retired last year and it made sense to move on from beautiful 3 Snows Road to give “the children” some space. Sevenoaks offers “independent living” which means there is no medical care provided but it a safe haven near the usual important facilities. There is a pleasant camaraderie among the elderly residents who meet for regular activities such as Sunday lunches, movies and coffee mornings – no pressure. Good company. In addition, I still go to weekly exercise classes (Strength and Balance) and twice monthly Probus meetings where I am the Welfare contact person and scribe for reports on the various visiting speakers. Of course, we still spend much enjoyable time at 3 Snows Road.

As always, my happiest and most caring support comes from the faith community, which is now located for me at the Anglican Church of the Ascension at Aldgate. I am on the duty roster for the readings, cleaning the church, welcoming visitors, the prayer chain and the monthly healing service. In addition, four of us go to local aged care facilities to take short services with prayers, hymns and bible readings for the residents. There is a small and close group who attend weekly Christian Meditation followed by communion service on a Wednesday with coffee to follow. Wonderful fellowship led by our priest Andy Wurm. This more informal service includes a reading followed by discussion of whatever arises. This leads on to really interesting learning, sharing and deepening of our understanding of the Bible texts.

Looking forward to....

A visit from Michael (elder son) and his family from Dublin, Ireland

A week in Port Douglas in July to warm up!

A silent retreat in August

Clearing “stuff” from the garage to kids/monthly church charity sale/salvos/rubbish

Possibly a visit to Melbourne before too long

And Spring!!!!

With love and warm greetings to you all from freezing South Aust!

Dorothea

## ***10 years of The Mustard Seed***

The first issue of The Mustard Seed was in July 2009, and now we’re up to issue 30.

There were earlier Church magazines and newsletters. Some of these were a little more ambitious than the current magazine, some less so, but hopefully we’ve struck a balance. The fact that technology has evolved has helped, too.

Thanks are due to the entire Congregation, who have regularly contributed articles and photos. Hopefully, we’re going to be around for a little while yet.



# THE BIG KOALA AND SOME SILOS

by Margo Anderson

October 2018 saw us take a short trip into the Wimmera Mallee area to drive the Silo Art Trail.

As a woman, country born in the Mallee and raised in the Western District on the land, I was aching to go. I love the landscape, the wide and open plains {bit too poetic here}, the burnish of the grass and crops, the roll of the wind, the fences built to manage stock and roo, wide gates to accommodate headers and to see the lushness built around homesteads where families thrive/or not.

I think it is part of my DNA, this connection to land and primary producing; feeding the people is what farmers do. I drop into a silence and feel an inexplicable warmth deep within. I love the changing vistas, the changing use of land, the changing tree lines and species, the different water catchments and flows---I am "at home".

This particular Silo Art Trail follows a "Wimmera Mallee straight line" north of Dadswell Bridge, starting at Rupanyap, through Sheep Hills to Brim and then Rosebery and Lascelles, finishing at Pachewollock. Each silo painted by a different artist and all reflecting local people and sensibilities.

At Rupanyap we saw youth and energy depicted with two local kids in their sports gear painted onto a pair of conjoined squat steel grain silos. This black and white work honours the role of sport such as Basket ball and Aussie Rules in rural Australian communities; youthful strength, hope and camaraderie are all represented in this work by Russian mural artist, Julia Volchkova. It was worked in 2017.

Sheep Hills is a railway siding and silo sight, nothing else {and yet everything else}, and we saw a richly coloured image that tells of the local Indigenous people, Wergaia Elder Uncle Ron Marks, Wotjobaluk Elder Aunty Regina Hood and two youngsters, Savannah Marks and Curtly McDonald. This includes motifs of local dreaming and the exchange of wisdom, knowledge and customs down through the generations. It was painted in 2016 by Adante {yes that's his name} whose recent work can be seen on the Public Housing estate in Collingwood.

The Brim silo (see picture below) was the first to be painted in Victoria in early 2016 and set a trend which other towns have thankfully followed; it is also a town where I have family so this site pressed another "happy button" for me. This sepia coloured work was painted by Guido van Helton and anonymously represents local people depicting what he called the strength and resilience of the local farming community.

The Rosebery silo was painted in 2017 by Kaffe-eine {yes that's her name} using sepia colours and aims to show local people's grit, tenacity and character. She wanted to depict the local female farmers' strength as they face drought, fires and other hardships. The man with his horse portrays a "quiet moment between dear friends" as these working partnerships on the land are essential and deep. The artist aimed to embody the regions past, present and future.

The next silo we saw was at Lascelles, on Silo Road no less, and again in the earthy sepia tones. Painted in 2017 by Rone, (yes that's his name) this work shows a farming couple who are fourth generation Lascelles land owners and primary producers. The artist wanted to show the subjects as wise and knowing, nurturing the town's future with their vast farming knowledge and longstanding connection to the area.



This Silo Tail is to be driven through rather driven up and down in one day as we did and the last silo at Pachewollock was a stretch too far for us to take. But the SILO flyer spoke about it in a similar manner as the other work, local, strength, archetypical, knowing and community.

Whilst in the district, we also took a drive out to Natimuk to see Mount Arapiles where sheer cliff climbing is very popular to participate in, or watch as it was in our case. There is stunning rock formations here with grand vistas from the top of the mount right across such rich farming land.

We also had a day driving through the top end of the Grampians around Halls Gap. This is about 60 miles from my home town of Dunkeld, so very familiar to me.

Let's not leave Dadswell Bridge out of this overview!

I can't quite come at calling it a town; rather it is a shop, a zoo, an Indian restaurant and a Big Koala. Situated between Stawell and Horsham it a stopping place --- not sure what for.



The Big Koala in the “township” of Dadswell Bridge makes me proud to be an Aussie, we do these “Big” things so well and I love them. There was a souvenir shop within its belly, but the door was jamming the day I visited so I was unable to purchase any memorabilia, a missed opportunity! The Zoo had turkeys, emus and wallabies, no koalas and was decidedly uninspiring as Zoos go.

So what did we learn? Community matters, country people are resilient and good hearted, towns are struggling but not crippled, art is uplifting, our land is precious and giving, Big things matter as much as small things and taking time to watch these in a prayerful manner is worthwhile.

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## The Glass Church

The Channel Islands lie close to the French coast and during WW2, suffered greatly under Nazi occupation. In fact this was the only part of the UK to be captured, and a tourist today can see several of the enormous cement fortifications left by the Germans.

In 2017, I was fortunate to join a tour to Jersey, one of the larger islands. An unexpected and unscheduled highlight of our visit was a stop at the amazing Glass Church, near St Helier (the main town). From the exterior this is an unassuming white building which one might easily drive past- but inside is another matter. Those who have spent any time in the UK will be familiar with Boots the Chemist, with a presence in most towns and cities. Jesse Boot, the founder, made a fortune from his chain of pharmacies. He was a considerable philanthropist and a life-long Methodist. After his death, his wife, Florence, often holidayed on the French Riviera where she became friendly with Rene Lalique, the world famous artist in glass. Examples of his work often turn up on the Antiques Roadshow TV program, and early examples are considered very valuable today. In 1934, Florence, now Lady Trent, commissioned Rene to decorate the inside of the modest St Matthews Church in the village of Millbrook - where she had grown up as a girl.

To enter this church today is a jaw-dropping experience. The famous Lalique glass is everywhere – the giant cross, altar, font, interior walls, and imposing angels – all made from clouded glass. From a first impression I imagined that this would be a church with a ‘high’ liturgical emphasis. However, from its website, and despite its uniquely lavish interior, it is clearly an evangelical Anglican community. Have a look at ‘glass jersey church You Tube’ on your computer. It will show you the interior I am trying to describe – and better than these words. Bill R



# *Around Armadale*



Palm Sunday (above)

Easter Sunday (above), and some of the artwork on display at the Art and Discussion event at the church, hosted by Ruth Hearn, on 8 May (right, and below).



We were pleased to welcome Belinda Clear to lead us on 19 May (left).

# Slow prayer

Slow me down, good Lord,  
when I apply myself to prayer.  
Put brakes upon my hasty soul.

Let words with you considered be,  
deliberating, cautious,  
chosen with much care,  
discerned, distilled  
and savoured, relished;  
fit responses to your sacred Word.

May my praying be like childbirth;  
come to life through struggle, pain and blood.

May my praying be like pulling teeth;  
painful, slow, but healing for all that.

May my praying grow by evolution's rules  
two steps forward, one step back.

May my praying be an uphill grind  
to scale a peak and see a vista grand.

May my praying lead to silent awe  
when, lost for words, my spirit finds its voice.

May my praying never hurried be  
that this my stumbling gait will be in step with you.

May my praying grow on me  
and it's right season find;  
that sprouting, blooming, dying  
in its own good time  
my prayer a pleasing offering will be.

©Karel Reus, September 2017

*Prayer is the great antidote to the illusion that we are self-made.*  
Walter Brueggemann



# Everyone has a Story!

The congregation enjoyed lunch together on 7 July when we exchanged some of our life stories. Thanks to all who contributed and especially to Margo A and Heather C for making the arrangements.



# The Guitar and Me

Hugh L



On the purchase of a new guitar I was prevailed to write upon the differences between the two I now have. This without jargon I will attempt to do.

GAS is a TLA (Three Letter Acronym) that refers to “Guitar Acquisition Syndrome” which is not yet present in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, another TLA), although I have it on good authority (my Parents) that it soon will be. Chiefly it refers to the delusion that the purchase of another guitar will immediately confer superior playing skills no matter how little the guitarist practices. There are people who collect guitars as an investment with a view to maintenance of value, but I am not one. One should however be aware of its existence.

Historically there are two leaders in the guitar market, Gibson and Fender both of whom produce different styles of guitars, with (one would hope) different sounds. According to “The Guitar Handbook” by Ralph Denyer (1982 Dorling Kindersley Ltd, London), Orville Gibson was born in Chataugay, New York in 1856 and formed the Gibson company with a group of businessmen 1902. This same book cites Leo Fender as formally starting business in 1948, although in 1965 for health reasons he sold Fender to CBS for thirteen million dollars.

I have a 2016 Gibson Les Paul Standard, purchased in early 2017, and a Fender Stratocaster Pro, purchased in early 2019. They are both nice guitars with different characteristics that can be easily explained although the existential “why” of purchasing both of them is harder. They (notwithstanding that others have more) were there.

The “Les Paul” is a solid body guitar (it is not hollow as with acoustic guitars) that is equipped with two PAF style “humbucker” pick ups. The Fender Stratocaster (“Strat”) is also a solid body guitar but is equipped with three “single coil” pick ups. In both cases the pickups sit in the body of the guitar across and underneath the strings between the bridge - where the strings join the body of the guitar - and where the neck joins the body. In both cases it is the interaction of the string within the magnetic field of the pickup that generates the signal that is amplified.

A single coil guitar pickup (largely associated with Fender) has a coil of wire wrapped around six magnetic poles one for each string inserted vertically so that the magnetic “end” is presented to the string. These types of pickups generally provide a trebly sound and tend to be used in rock and roll, famously by Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan and others.

A humbucker is essentially two single coil pickups in series. Denyer (p 53) states “Humbucking pickups have two coils instead of one. They are wired in series (so that the current flows through one, then the next) but out of phase with each other. This means that that any rogue interference is sent by one coil as a positive signal and by the other as a negative signal. The two opposite currents, flowing in different directions, therefore cancel each other out, and the ‘hum’ is not passed on to the amplifier.” These pickups have a “fatter” sound and tend to be used by more “progressive” musicians such as Frank Zappa and John McLaughlin and others, although they are also used in rock and roll.



It is quite possible that with the two types of pickups, equalisation of the signals (by manipulating various frequency responses) can make one sound like another. This is more complicated than just buying another guitar and arguably (the “why”) not as much fun. Expensive EQ equipment is also complicated in lugging around.

I myself would like to thank parishioners of Armadale UC, Parents and workmates for putting up with me during the process of acquiring these guitars and am now sitting at home with a ridiculous amount of equipment for a Housing Commission flat and absolutely no excuse for not practising. Cheers!



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY SUSANNA!

2019 marks the 350th anniversary of the birth of Susanna Wesley. Although she is mostly remembered these days as the mother of her famous sons John and Charles, she deserves recognition in her own right as an accomplished writer, teacher and theologian. During her life she experienced many hardships. Her husband was the local clergyman at Epworth where the family lived, and at one time he left her and the children for a year. He also spent time in prison for the non-payment of debts. Not a perfect marriage! Over their time in the village the rectory was burnt down on two occasions and young John nearly lost his life.



Undeterred, Susanna insisted that her ten surviving children, including the girls, should have a good moral and intellectual education. Each child was put to learning for six hours a day as soon as they turned five, and they were expected to be conversant with the alphabet by the end of their first year.

Susanna herself found time to write many letters as well as commentaries on the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. She composed several prayers, including this one: 'Help me O Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church ... nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in your presence'.

Her influence on her two famous sons was obviously profound. Without her, Methodism may not have come to be – and the building we worship in now at Armadale might not exist.

*from Methodist Heritage and Wikipedia*

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## SMILE PLEASE

A lay preacher who usually led services in very small churches, was once asked to preach in a very large church. Somewhat nervous, he rang the church secretary to find out what the acoustics were like.

'Is there a microphone I can use?' he asked.

'No' replied the secretary. 'You will have to shout! - the agnostics here are terrible'.

## After prayers, lie cold

Arise my body, my small body, we have striven  
enough, and He is merciful, we are forgiven.  
Arise small body, puppet-like and pale, and go  
white as the bedclothes into bed, and cold as snow.  
Undress with small cold fingers and put out the light  
and be alone, hushed mortal, in the sacred night,  
- a meadow flat with the rain, a cup  
emptied and clean, a garment washed and folded up,  
faded in colour, thinned almost to raggedness  
by dirt and by the washing of that dirtiness.  
Be not too quickly warm again. Lie cold; consent  
to weariness and pardon's watery element.  
Drink up the bitter water, breathe the chilly death.  
Soon enough comes the riot of our blood and breath.

**C.S. Lewis**

Most people are bothered by those passages in scripture they cannot understand. But as for me, I always noticed that the passages that trouble me most are those I do understand.

Mark Twain

### **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.

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.*