



THE UNITING CHURCH
in Australia

ORMOND



THE

PATHFINDER

MARCH 2024

MINISTER'S LETTER

Thin Places

So let me start by saying 'thin places' is NOT a new diet that is taking off and reducing the overweight by 10s of kilos in the space of a couple of months. Nor is the sort of thin place I am thinking of like that of the (true) story of a young man who got crushed by a falling boulder when he was canyoning in the (very narrow) canyons in the deserts of Utah in the USA. After several days with his wrist caught and crushed between a fallen, large rock and the canyon wall (three quarters of a metre wide at that point), he took the extremely courageous decision to cut off his hand to free himself. He survived and, believe it or not, flourished in his chosen career of rock and mountain climbing!

Actually, I think this IS closer to what I mean by 'thin places!' That is, this young man sat on the thin edge/gap between life and death. He chose life and then seized the day!

Eric Weiner, a New York Times journalist wrote an article about 'Thin Places,' in March (9th) 2012. He wrote:

It is, admittedly, an odd term. One could be forgiven for thinking that thin places describe skinny nations (see Chile) or perhaps cities populated by thin people (see Los Angeles). No, thin places are much deeper than that. They are locales where the distance between heaven and earth collapses and we're able to catch glimpses of the divine, or the transcendent or, as I like to think of it, the Infinite Whatever.

I like that!

Locales where the distance between heaven and earth 'collapse,' and we see, sense, know we have been in the presence of the 'Infinite Whatever!'

Thin Places:

Weiner suggests that thin places '*relax us, yes, but they also transform us — or, more accurately, unmask us. In thin places, we become our more essential selves.*'

Thin Places do not have to be religious, although they often are. I remember walking into the almost finished Gaudi Cathedral in Barcelona, Sagrada Familia. I literally gasped as I looked around, staggered by 'something deep' within me, a wondrous connection between the Infinite and myself – God felt extraordinarily close – even though 1000s were busily taking photos and doing the tourist thing in the Cathedral.

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People Page

Pancake Day 2024 – We were disappointed not to be able to gather for Pancakes this year but thanks to your generosity, we have been able to donate \$340 to Share. Many thanks to everyone who contributed.

Thanks to *Lorraine* for our cover photo of her setup for Lent.

Several of our number have been unwell either at home or in hospital during February. Our thoughts are with you. Please remember that although we do not currently have an ongoing minister, pastoral care is available. Contact your Pastoral Link person or the church office. It is also lovely to see folk who haven't been able to worship for a time, returning. We do enjoy your company.

Worship plans: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Day

Maundy Thursday: We will not be organising a service this year. However we are hoping to locate another Uniting Church in the area to visit. If you are interested in attending a service speak with Dianne Richter. Details will also be including in weekly newsheets.

Good Friday: Worship at 4.00 p.m. at Ormond Church of Christ led by Ron Townsend.

Easter Day: Worship at 4.00 p.m. at Ormond Church of Christ.

Remember: If you need assistance with transport to attend worship, please contact Cate in the Church Office.



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I have also found myself in an unwanted, Lenten, thin place. As I have watched the war in Gaza explode, on several occasions I have viewed footage of Palestinian children crying and imploring whoever would listen, with their hurt and grief, as their homes are bombed and families killed. Here there truly is a thin place, where the suffering Christ cries in agony and I see the depth of our God-of-Love's helpless distress in the children. Heaven and earth so close in suffering and loss. Hard to stomach, but inexorably transformational!!

Michael McGirr (This Cup We Bless -page 40) shares the story of the Woman at the Well encounter between Jesus and this Samaritan Woman – it is a thin place for her too. In a state of complete and total transformation, she screams to her community and the world, 'come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.' McGirr suggests Jesus enables this broken soul to find, 'her place in community by accepting her own unique and painful story.'

Thin places.

Where are your thin places?

In particular, where are the 'thin places' in your, and our, Lenten journeys to the Cross?

Keep looking and praying to see, visit and be transformed in these thin places because the Suffering, Dying God of Jesus is ever so close!

Much love

Ron



PCG Update on our re-development

Dear Ormond UCA Friends,

You may recall that the report in the last Pathfinder indicated that work on our redevelopment was due to start in early March and that we were, therefore, in the midst of clearing the church, the minister's vestry and the link in anticipation of the works beginning. Kevin Davis (Marg's husband) and Meagan Davis (their daughter) have worked hard selling pews and other furniture we will not require, and Dianne and Gary Richter and Robyn Mulder have led the sorting, disposal of and/or storage of everything else. Thanks to everyone who has helped with this task.

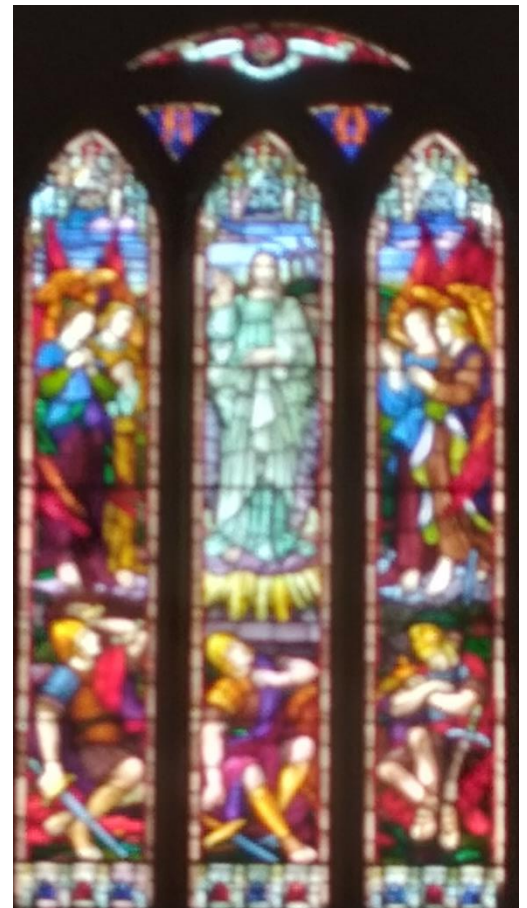
Before the commencement of demolition and building works, a revised Town Planning Permit was required (as we have reduced the size of the development). This application was submitted in January, but Glen Eira Council then asked for revised landscape plans and water sensitive design plans to be submitted as well. That work has been done and we are now awaiting the issuing of the new Town Planning Permit. I have asked Synod Property Services to ensure that our Town Planning Consultant is keeping in weekly contact with Council to ensure we receive the permit as early as possible.

We were hopeful that Simbuilt could start the relatively small amount of demolition (in the minister's vestry and within the church) without having the signed off drawings from Council, but the building surveyor has confirmed he requires a s.29A demolition consent (which needs Council approval). So, we are in the hands of the Glen Eira Council Planning Department at the moment. The current 'guesstimate' is a start on site sometime in April.

The **good news** is that Simbuilt don't think this will change the end date, as they believe they should be able to make up for the delay during the construction. So we are still anticipating being back in our own church for Christmas 2024.

Mardie Townsend (on behalf of the PCG)

26th February 2024



'Ladies Do Lunch' Outing

Where : Bay Road Nursery
112 Bay Rd. Sandringham

When : Friday 15th March, 2024

Time : 12:30 PM



Enjoy a relaxed light lunch and chat in lovely surroundings.
If you would like to attend please let me know.

If you require a lift please let me know.

Anne Barry

Mobile : 0421 074 033

LENT EVENT - 40 days of faithful action for God's creation



Lent Event is inspired by a simple but powerful idea. That every one of us has a role to play in building a world free from poverty and injustice.

It's especially true of the issue of climate change.

Climate change is worsening every threat to peace, security and human wellbeing in our world.

It's going to take all of us, doing all we can, with all our hearts, to fight it.

We believe people of faith have a powerful role to play in taking meaningful climate action, as well as inspiring hope and courage to face the future.

Join us for Lent Event. 14 February – 28 March, 2024

Commit to 40 days of faithful action for God's creation. Start wherever you're at with a large or small sustainability challenge. Use it to fundraise to help vulnerable communities who are fighting to build resilience and mitigate climate impacts. Raise your voice.

Along the way, we'll be considering the role of faith in caring for God's creation through a series of short devotions and video interviews with our partners and theologians.

Sign up today and start inspiring others to join! [**www.lentevent.com.au**](http://www.lentevent.com.au)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

Ormond Uniting Church AGM will be held this year on
Sunday 28th April.

Please could you put this important date in your diary.

Many thanks,

Brenda Grootendorst
Congregational Secretary.

Food donations for Refugees

It was very disappointing to have to cancel Pancake Tuesday due to the weather – however, it was not without benefit to some people. A big thank you to the ‘Pancake Team’ for the generous donation of long life milk and flour for the refugees who depend on the foodbank at the Brigidine Sisters in Port Melbourne. The donation was very much appreciated.

Just a reminder that on **Sunday March 3rd** we will be collecting any food donations that our congregation would like to give to the foodbank. (Next collection will be Sunday 7th April)

Some examples of items currently needed are: cans of fruit and tomatoes, noodles, tuna, basmati rice. **Honey is a most appreciated food** and a special treat.

A box will be at the entrance of the Church with the welcoming person.

Many thanks

Brenda.





MARCH PROGRAM

Pastoral Care – Living the Good News

First session is this Sunday, 3rd March!

Join us after worship for a time of learning followed by a shared meal.

Wondering what pastoral care is? In its broadest sense it's serving others in a way that helps. As the body of Christ, we are all involved in pastoral care. It can happen at anytime, anywhere. Sometimes when we engage in concrete acts of care, we are communicating the healing power of the gospel far better than words.

Over three sessions we will explore what it means to care for ourselves and others. All are welcome to be a part of this course and we hope YOU will join us.

Second and third sessions will be on Sundays (17th and 24th March). If you can't be at all three sessions – that's ok. Join us as you are able.

The sessions have been scheduled to finish during daylight saving time so that it is still light and there will be transport available to take you home.

Like to know more: Speak with Lisa, Dianne or Brad

"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospel of John (15:11-12)

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

It was good catching up for the first time in 2024. 7 friends were able to attend & we were sorry that a few members were unable to attend for health reasons. We pray that they will be well enough to come in March.

YOU too are welcome to join us for a chat & afternoon tea .

WHEN? WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH (3rd Wednesday)
WHERE? JAN & GRAEME DAVENPORT'S HOME
TIME? 1.30 PM

For more information & the address please phone me.

Take care
Jan Davenport
ph: 9578 1713



Lectioary Readings

March 3 rd	Lent 3	Exodus 20:1-17, Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, John 2:13-22
March 10 th	Lent 4	Numbers 21:4-9, Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22, Ephesians 2:1-10, John 3:14-21
March 17 th	Lent 5	Jeremiah 31:31-34, Psalm 51:1-12, or <i>Psalm 119:9-16</i> , Hebrews 5:5-10, Hebrews 5:5-10, John 12:20-33
March 24 th	Liturgy of the Palms	Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Mark 11:1-11 or <i>John 12:12-16</i>
	Liturgy of the Passion	Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 14:1-15:47 or <i>Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)</i>
March 25	Annunciation of the Lord	Isaiah 7:10-14, Psalm 45 or <i>Psalm 40:5-10</i> , Hebrews 10:4-10, Luke 1:26-38
March 28	Maundy Thursday	Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14, Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 11:23- 26, John 13:1-17, 31b-35
March 29	Good Friday	Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10:16-25 or <i>Hebrews 4:14- 16; 5:7-9</i> , John 18:1-19:42
March 30	Holy Saturday	Job 14:1-14 or <i>Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24</i> , Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16, 1 Peter 4:1-8, Matthew 27:57-66 or <i>John 19:38-42</i>
March 31	Easter Day	Acts 10:34-43 or <i>Isaiah 25:6-9</i> , Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or <i>Acts 10:34-43</i> , John 20:1-18 or <i>Mark 16:1-8</i>
April 7	Easter 2	Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133, 1 John 1:1- 2:2, John 20:19-31

Rosters

	Reading	Prayers	Communion	Welcoming
March 3 rd	Karen O	Mardie T	Heather B Marg D	Hans T Frank O
March 10 th	Warwick B	Dianne R		Brenda G Robyn M
March 17 th	Marg D	Ron T		Mardie T Dianne R
March 24 th	Brenda G	Hether B		Gary Richter Marg D
March 31 st	Dianne R	Warwick B		Hans T Lorraine D
April 7 th	Warwick B	David N	Warwick B Mardie T	Jan D Graeme D

	Sound	Afternoon Tea	Resource Delivery
March 3 rd	Robyn M	Nev P Lorraine D	Mardie T
March 10 th	Gary R	Suzie F Lynne P	Brenda G
March 17 th	Graeme D	Lorraine D Lisa S	Ron T
March 24 th	Lisa S	Mardie T Ron T	Gary R
March 31 st	Robyn M	Mardie T Ron T	Frank O
April 7 th	Gary R	Suzie F Jan D	Marg D

Images

Cover: Reader supplied

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/palm-sunday--486599934726345735/>

<https://unitingworld.org.au/lent-event-is-coming/>

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/121315783685887048/>

<https://unsplash.com/photos/a-group-of-people-sitting-around-a-table-with-food-vJsi-hgOEG0>

others by OUC members

Diary Dates

Sunday 3 rd March	4.00 p.m..	Worship – Revd Ron Townsend
	4.00 p.m.	Food collection for asylum seekers
	5.30 p.m.	Pastoral Care – Living the Good News
Wednesday 6 th March	7.45 p.m.	Formation Group meeting
Sunday 10 th March	4.00 p.m.	Worship – Revd Dr Tony Floyd
Wednesday 13 th March	12.30 p.m.	Wednesday Home Group
Friday 15 th March	12.30 p.m.	Ladies Do Lunch
Sunday 17 th March	4.00 p.m.	Worship – Revd Dr Tony Floyd
	5.30 p.m.	Pastoral Care – Living the Good News
Tuesday 19 th March	7.45 p.m.	Church Council
Sunday 24 th March	4.00 p.m.	Worship – Warwick Barry
	5.30 p.m.	Pastoral Care – Living the Good News
Friday 29 th March	4.00 p.m.	Good Friday – Ron Townsend
Sunday 31 st March	4.00 p.m.	Easter Day Worship
Sunday 7 th April	4.00 p.m..	Worship – Revd Ron Townsend
	4.00 p.m.	Food collection for asylum seekers
Wednesday 10 th April	12.30 p.m.	Wednesday Home Group
Tuesday 16 th April	7.45 p.m.	Church Council

Wednesday Home Group

Our default timing for the Home Group for 2024, is 12.30 pm on the second Wednesday of the month and will include lunch. All are welcome. Contact Ron for details of where the group is meeting.

Blessings

Ron

