

Pondering this New Year 2024



As each year commences, I often consciously remember as I fill in the dates on various forms that it is now a different year. What might this year bring?

Listening to the news media there are often grim predictions about new leadership, the terrible consequences of wars and international conflict, the effects of climate change and the latest wild weather events, while the celebratory stories it seems are the minor voices. Exploring the Scriptures, I note that years are referred to in different yet sometimes complementary ways.

In my Revised Standard Version Bible Concordance, I see that "years" are often cited numerically and in relation to sovereign rulers. Examples include, "Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam's son of Nebat, Abijam began to rule over Judah" (I Kings 15:1) and "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne" (Isaiah 6:1).

The years here are not just chronological, they have meanings inferred that remind the hearers that something has shifted, and for those with the eyes of faith, a belief that God is involved in these societal changes and a sovereign influence.

Perhaps, in this week's crowning of a Danish King Frederik and his queen Australian-born Mary after Queen Marguerite abdicated has similar overtones of significance. Likewise, in the significant "Year of Jubilee" as described in the Book of Leviticus which is deemed a time of joy. Here, in the fiftieth year the Israelite people were to implement a sabbatical year by giving the land a rest from tilling or working the soil, forgiving all debts owed, granting freedom to any Hebrew slaves and with thanksgiving, trust in the providence of God for all they received.

This Year of Jubilee can be compared to the "Year of the Lord's favour" mentioned in Luke's gospel, chapter 4 in the story of the sermon preached by Jesus in his hometown

of Nazareth. Here he speaks of his missional task to proclaim, "the Year of the Lord's favour" which includes "bringing good news to the poor" and "setting the captives free". This year seems to stretch beyond a mere amount of time and heralds a society where there is more justice and equity, mercy, and forgiveness.

What kind of year might 2024 be for St John's, Elsterwick, a year of God's favour and mercy? Or merely, like turning another page in life's book without reflecting on the significance of our own missional task?

We too seem called to implement changes with thanksgiving and letting go of what we thought was permanent to find a new pathway. My prayer is for a time like a Year of Jubilee where, with sabbath intent, we consider pray and trust in God's provision, and that it is not an "annus horribilis" a distressing year (as the late Queen Elisabeth once put it) rather it can be a year of blessing, faithfulness and new life which bears fruit for many years to come.

Peace to all.



Rev Dr Lynette Dungan



World Day of Prayer
Friday 1 March
Palestine

Church Council Report

January 2024

Church Council has continued its conversation about the future of St John's. This involves both ministry and use of property. There are many requirements involved in calling a minister from setting up a Joint Nominating Committee, defining the church's mission, completing a 12-page form gathering this information and being part of conversations with people who have been designated as possibilities. With limited people willing to do this work we have been unable to make much progress. Being small also means that we do not need a full-time person so we have reached out to neighbouring congregations to consider possibilities of a joint call. In early February, the Worship and Nurture Committee and Church Council will have a joint meeting to consider ideas and how these can be presented to the Annual General Meeting.

Worship and Nurture

St John's continues to offer opportunities for the community to connect with the church. The fete, Craft and Chat on Monday afternoons, Chatty Café on Wednesday mornings, Advent study, Carol service and open church have all shown that there are things happening at the church. The new programs of Taize service, Discussion night and "What lifts your spirits" discussion group on Tuesday afternoons were all ways of beginning to make connections with the CSCH community.

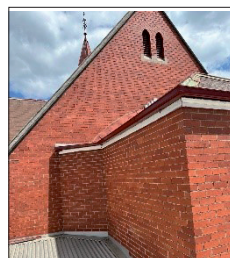


Due to illness, Karel Reus was unable to lead worship at the end of November so Patricia and Cathy visited him and Margaret in their home to present a book voucher and plant. We expressed heartfelt thanks for their leadership, insights and support over the last four years. St John's wishes them well as they move to their new home in Parkdale.

The editors, Andrea, Patricia and Geoff, thank all *Link* contributors. Thanks to Colin for his proofreading.

Property and Finance

The weatherboard repairs and painting of the hall are almost complete. The final section of the walls facing Foster Street are a challenge as the power lines are close to the working areas. The carpenters and painters have been working hard to make sure all necessary approvals are in place for the completion of the work safely and adherence to compliance regulations.



Roofing work is progressing well with the box gutters and metalwork at each corner of the slate roof and the new spouting around the lower roof (over the organ) completed.

Food for Families



Thanks to everyone from the church and community who contributed to filling the five boxes with food to be distributed through Uniting in Prahran.

Cathy

A Reviving Cordial

3 spoonful Good temper
3 spoonful Bright cheerfulness
3 spoonful Humility

Mix all ingredients with a few drops of the spirit of love and thoughtfulness for others, and pour out to your friends on dark and cloudy days. The effect will be marvellous and must be seen to be believed.

Found in a recipe book produced to raise money for Ely Cathedral restoration appeal in about 1981.

From Pauline

Christmas at St John's

Sunday 17 December
Celebration of Carols



Candles (courtesy of Audrey), decorative lighting (prepared by Alex's grandchildren Jack and Sasha) and the brightly-lit Christmas tree mixed with rays from the evening sun set the scene for the Celebration of Carols.

Cathy conducted the service, Ken provided the music while Alex, Andrea, Audrey, Cathy and Patricia read these Bible extracts: Matthew 2: 1-12, John 1: 1-14, Luke 2: 1, 3-7, Luke 2: 8-16, Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7, and Luke 1: 26-35, 38.

Throughout the service, we heartily sang these carols: Once in royal David's city; O little town of Bethlehem; Love came down at Christmas; O come all ye faithful; Born in the night; Virgin Mary had a baby boy; Away in a manger; While shepherds watched their flocks by night; The people that in darkness walked; O come, O come, Emmanuel; The angel Gabriel from heaven came; and Hark! the herald angels sing. Supper in the East Room (below) concluded an enjoyable and joyous evening.



Tuesday 19 December
Open Church Organ playing
by Ken



We gathered in the church on a fine afternoon in anticipation of fine organ playing that showcased the refurbished organ.

We were not disappointed as Ken proceeded to play a variety of carols from Australia and overseas, including: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel; Come your hearts and voices raising; While shepherds watched their flocks by night; On Christmas night all Christians sing; The first nowell the angels did say; The angel Gabriel from heaven came; Hark! the herald angels sing; O come all ye faithful; and The north wind is tossing the leaves.

Interspersed were longer pieces by J S Bach, Praetorius, Vaughan Williams and Walford Davies.

The following comments were made at the conclusion of the recital.

- Ken showed the organ's different moods – from the loud to the soft, and slow to more rousing music.
- Successful event.
- Thank you for an hour of peaceful music.
- The sound was very powerful. To me the organ sounded clearer and more brilliant. The impression was being surrounded by sound. Ken demonstrated a range of styles.
- Brilliant, relaxing, fantastic.
- A marvellous rendition from Ken on the organ – enjoyable and relaxing afternoon.

These comments suggest that further organ recitals would be most welcome.

Geoff

Christmas at St John's *continued*

Sunday 3 December

Advent Study

Six members of our congregation attended an Advent Study at the church on Sunday 3 December, led by Rev Dr Lynette Dungan.

Two sessions were held before lunch and two after. We began with prayer and the lighting of the Advent Candle.

You may like to follow the readings yourself in a time of quiet and thus I have listed them for you so you can meditate upon them.

Discussion followed each section on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love and each person wrote in a few words what each meant to them.

The list of readings is as follows.

Hope

- Lamentations 3: 1–20
How do you react to the verse?
- Lamentations 3: 21–26, 31–33
How is hope found?
- Romans 8: 18–25
What is hoped for in verses 24 and 25?

Peace

- Isaiah 9: 6–7
- Isaiah 65: 17–25
The word translated peace in the verses is the Hebrew word *Shalom*.

Joy

- Psalm 95: 1–7
- Psalms 96 and 97
- Philippians 4: 4–8
Together in Song 268 Joy to the world, the Lord has come.

Love

- Ephesians 3: 14–21
- 1 John 4: 16–18
Together in Song 317 Love came down at Christmas.

Thank you Lynette, thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

Patricia

Church services

The service on Christmas Eve was led by Cathy with Rev Dr Lynette Dungan taking the services on Christmas Day and New Years Eve.

Other activities

Chatty Cafe with Rhonda and Don continued through December as did Craft and Chat after their Christmas celebrations. Friday Friends had their November lunch at Dawn Eatery in Elsternwick. Their annual barbecue will be held on 26 January at Harleston Park.

Social Justice Calendar

February 2024

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1–7 | World Interfaith Harmony Week |
| 6 | International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation |
| 13 | Shrove Tuesday |
| 13 | 2008: Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations |
| 14 | Ash Wednesday |
| 17 | 2014: Murder of Iranian Asylum Seeker Reza Barati in Offshore Immigration Detention |
| 20 | World Day of Social Justice |

March 2024

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Zero Discrimination Day |
| 1 | World Day of Prayer |
| 1 | International Day of Unplugging |
| 3 | World Wildlife Day |
| 3 | Clean Up Australia Day |
| 8 | International Women's Day |
| 15–21 | Harmony Week |
| 21 | Harmony Day |
| 21 | National Close the Gap Day |
| 21 | International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination |
| 22 | International Water Day |
| 23 | Earth Hour (8.30pm–9.30pm) |
| 24 | Palm Sunday |
| 24 | International Day for the Right to the Truth |
| 29 | Good Friday |
| 31 | Easter Sunday |

Source: Justice and International Mission



Craft and Chat at Christmas

What did Adam say when he was asked his favorite holiday? "It's Christmas, Eve."

Congratulations

We were pleased to see Lynette and Greg graduate as Doctors of Philosophy in December after much toil and effort. Great news! Each has kindly provided an insight into their research.

Lynette



My PhD thesis entitled *Supervising from a contemplative stance: A Collaborative inquiry* investigated ten spiritual care supervisors' experiences of contemplative supervision, in a search for knowledge that could apply in supervision, in spiritual care, and various healthcare fields.

These participant supervisors, whose supervisees include clergy, chaplains, spiritual directors, and clinical pastoral education students found this approach supported spirituality, personal growth, and health in ways consistent with spiritual care goals.

Participants also found that supervising from a contemplative stance overlapped with aspects of spiritual direction and therapy, and encouraged deep listening and stillness, and open presence that supported meaning making.

This way of supervising was like forms of person-centred and compassionate care and contrasted with managerial and outcome-focused supervision that emphasise command or control rather than collaboration.

Recommendations proposed conversations between spiritual care supervisors and arts-based supervisors, clinical supervisors, and broader health promotion situations.

I greatly enjoyed the culmination of a long journey of study in the graduation ceremony at La Trobe University's Bundoora campus with my family on Friday 15 December 2023. I was presented with my PhD testament by John Brumby, the current Vice Chancellor.

Greg



Greg's thesis title is *The accounts of men in an Aboriginal-controlled Alcohol and other Drug Recovery Service: Contributions to relationally-informed practice*.

This project started in one place, and ended up somewhere else. A place where the territory was a bit wider. The journey influenced many lives, including mine.

I had been interested in documenting some of the experiences, challenges and commitments that men talked about in groupwork and counselling at the men's rehab where Marnie and I used to work. It became "everybody's project." The manager Mark Hammersley and Community Elder Leslie Stanley (you will have passed his art projects in St Kilda) were a crucial part of the relationships and directions. All the men participated, and several met in a

Steering Group at Topolinos in Fitzroy Steet. As Justin, one of the men said "If my story can help one other person, that will be worth it."

The men talked of isolation, racism and judgments in their lives, using alcohol and drugs to "get by", which in turn led to further judgments and isolation. Mark wanted people to know of the "massive" lives of the men. The men talked a lot about the pain of separation from children, and wanting to be the "best men" that they could be. Together we produced a 65 page booklet to help other men thinking of coming to the rehab. The project led to training materials for social workers, community workers and psychologists, focusing on "respectful practice", no matter what the cultures involved. Aboriginal Australia is the oldest living culture in the world, and is based on relationships. I have had great support from leaders in the field, talking about what the project offers all counselling and casework practice.

The project is about how we can live with each other in modern Australia. The way Les describes it, we "all want to be part of something bigger", joining together in respectful relationships to keep each other afloat.

We got together again at Topolinos after my graduation. Justin is now full-time carer of his son.

CSCH Garden Celebrating 10 years

The tenth anniversary of the Caulfield South Community Garden was a fabulous event with people sharing stories of the memories and feasting on yummy food created from the garden's produce.



People involved from the start marvelled at the changes while more recent members were stunned at the humble beginnings.



One of the most powerful stories for me was told to me by the daughter of Pete, the man who had planted the apricot tree. He was in a wheelchair and only had the use of one arm but he was determined to help so he was given a crowbar and spade to dig a hole. He

managed to dig through the asphalt and deep

enough to plant the apricot tree which now provides shade over the table which hosts so many events. As the daughter had grown up without a strong connection with her father who died in 2014 she was very moved to be able to feel his presence.

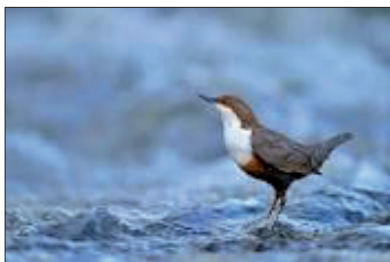
Britt who was the original designer produced a fabulous video to celebrate the anniversary which you might enjoy viewing. <https://youtu.be/tG-1ASw20fo>



Britt the garden designer, Bun an early garden committee member, Gemma the Manager when the garden was started and John a landscaper who is still involved and on the House Committee of Management.

Cathy

Feather



The blackbird and I were friends, the kind that depend on one another to reaffirm life's patterns and to embrace the cleansing wind. He awakened me with a song each morning and in his voice, I recognised his wider experience

of rising above difficulty to reach the purity of clouds and wind and sun.

In my garden I offered him water and seed and acceptance, never knowing if he understood my simple gifts were meant to praise him.

Then one day upon the ground I noticed a single blackbird feather.

What deeper gift can a bird give than what enables him to fly? Or to sing the song of his creation to me, forever rooted to the ground?

From *Shaman's Circle*, 1996, by Nancy Wood

From Andrea

**Pancake Day
Sunday 11 February**

From the wider church

Snippets from the Uniting Church Australia-wide

This month's column includes news from the Assembly, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Port Phillip East Presbytery, and a church congregation.

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)



The Rev Mark Kickett has been elected UAICC National Chair following three years as Interim Chair. "I am looking forward to

consolidating a new journey for the whole of Congress and to strengthening our ongoing relationship and commitment as part of who we are in the Uniting Church," said Rev Kickett.

Uniting Church President Rev Sharon Hollis welcomed the news of Rev Kickett's appointment.

"I look forward to continuing to work with Mark in the ways we seek to live out our covenanting relationship with Congress, particularly in its aspirations for self-determination and how we continue to stand with Congress in advocating for truth-telling, reconciliation and healing."

As Interim Chair, Rev Kickett played a significant role in fostering relationships and providing pastoral support for regional councils of Congress. This year he provided leadership from Congress to the whole Church in its engagement in the Voice referendum.

Rev Kickett has also worked closely with the Church in its advocacy and response to the Black Lives Matter movement, racism and Aboriginal deaths in custody. In 2021, he was formally admitted as a minister in the Uniting Church.

Earlier this year, he led the first national gathering of Congress after many years due to COVID, bringing together members from different parts of the country. Mark says it was "a reminder of the journey we have together as one Congress family."

Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Meeting 18–21 November 2023 Box Hill

Day One

Rev David Fotheringham gave his Moderator's Report in which he observed that he had met with "many wonderful people and witnessed wonderful, caring and thoughtful ministry".

He expressed disappointment at the result of the Voice referendum, and paid tribute to the way in which UCA members had rallied behind each other in the wake of the 2022 floods.

He also acknowledged presbyteries and committees faced many leadership challenges but "was heartened to see leaders everywhere navigating complex and difficult decisions". General Secretary Rev Dr Mark Lawrence later spoke of significant financial sustainability issues being addressed across the Synod.

Day Two

Day Two saw the announcement of Rev Salesi Faupula as Moderator-Elect who will take up the position in mid-2025.

The Tribute Service was held to highlight ministers who have died, retired or who had achieved significant milestones of service. Names associated with St John's and its predecessor churches include: died since 2022 Rev Denis Oakley; retired Rev Lingky Hartono Widodo; 50 years since ordination Rev Ian Porter and Rev Ron Townsend; 60 years Rev John Donnell and Rev Dr Denham Grierson; and 65 years Rev Warren Clarnette. More details are available in the December *Crosslight*.

Day Two also heard Australian-based President of the Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association, Ramila Chanisheff, outline the human rights abuses that are occurring against the ethnic Uyghur population in East Turkistan.

Justice and International Mission's Dr Mark Zirnsak spoke on the subject of ethical procurement and noted this was particularly relevant in the case of some widely-used solar panels whose components were almost certainly made in China using forced labour.

Considerable discussion took place on reducing the harm of prohibited drugs as part of a move towards a health-based approach. The proposal sought to support and advocate for the decriminalisation of possession and personal use of small amounts of illicit drugs.

Also discussed was the Faithful Future Project which represents important and challenging discussion for Victorian and Tasmanian members about the future of the Church.

Day Three

Discussion continued on drug policy in which the Rev Alastair McRae noted that its fundamental objective should be to keep people safe and reduce the harm of use. The issue of secure work was also discussed as part of support for greater worker equality, including those workers in the gig economy.

Day Four

On the issue of climate change, it was resolved that all parts of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania, its members, institutions and councils be encouraged to aim for zero emissions by 2040 at the latest.

It was also resolved that a Synod Emissions Reduction Fund, to be administered by the Synod Climate Action Taskforce, be established and that the taskforce report back to the next ordinary Synod Meeting on progress made and what further steps need to be taken, including financial resources required.

Sources and resources

Recording of each session is available at <http://tinyurl.com/39f37cwu>

Port Phillip East Presbytery

The final 2023 quarterly Presbytery-in-Council meeting was held by Zoom on 29 November 2023. The meeting started with worship and music before reports were received.

The election of Presbytery Standing Committee office bearers was held with these results: Presbytery Chair David Higham; Presbytery Deputy Chair Joy Blamires; Pastoral Relations Committee Chair Cameron McAdam; Property Committee Chair Gavin Faichney; and member Riak Kiir. Additional office bearers elected earlier are Presbytery Secretary Anne Kim, Jeff Gardner Presbytery Treasurer, and Ennis Macleod elected as Mission Leadership Development Committee, while Sam Joo and Ira Budino were elected as members.

Discussion then proceeded on an Assembly report entitled *Being an intergenerational church: a commitment, a vision, an invitation*. An intergenerational congregation, presbytery and synod encompasses all we do as a community – our caring, praying, learning, celebrating and serving. It is about people of all ages not just young people. An intentionally intergenerational environment is marked by mutuality (all in this together), equality (all are valued equally) and reciprocity (all give and receive). Intergenerationality does not just happen.

The report has four sections: Our commitment to being an intergenerational church; Our vision for an intergenerational church; an invitation to become a more intergenerational church which involves discovering, embracing and acting; and exploring resources for becoming an intergenerational church.

A copy of the report is on the table in the church.

Charlton Uniting Church



Our very small congregation is dedicated to regular attendance and support to those lay persons presenting worship services three times a month. We gather for morning tea following the service. Holy Communion is celebrated monthly, led by three presiders.

Our first Sunday is shared with St Martin's Anglican congregation which is also great Fellowship and we have four up-Market days in February, June, September and December which gathers members of the wider community.

We also cater for local funerals and other special celebrations as requested. The former Wesleyan Chapel, which has not been used for many years, has been leased and refurbished by the Golden Grains Museum.

Joy Freeman

Reprinted from Loddon Mallee Presbytery newsletter *The River of Life*, November 2023, p. 4.

Sign of the times



Hot cross buns
in January

Crafty Creations Mondays 1-3

Chatty Cafe Wednesdays 10-12

Sunday Nite Live 2nd Sunday each month

Op Shop Update

As we work to completely dispose of money and stock from the Op Shop a final round of donations as outlined in the table below was made in December. Our timing meant that two donations were doubled in value by other generous donors. These donations meant a total of \$623,000 was given away over the 23 years of operation of the Op Shop. A remarkable effort from such a little shop. It really shows the big heart that it was known for.

An outline of the work these organisations do and some highlights from the thank-you letters are included below.

Uniting

Uniting works to empower children, young people and families experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness, people with disabilities, unemployed and those seeking asylum to learn and thrive.

Frontier Services

Frontier Services continues John Flynn's vision to provide care for those doing it tough in rural and remote communities across Australia through the pastoral support of our Bush Chaplains and the practical support of our Outback Links volunteers.

Uniting World

Uniting World works with partner organisations around the world to assist building peace, providing health education, clean water, child protection and leadership training for vulnerable communities.

Act for Peace

Act for Peace supports people around the world and helps to provide healthcare for Syrian refugees living in Jordan, food for farmers in Zimbabwe, and training for entire communities in Vanuatu to help keep them safe from natural disasters.

Fareshare

Fareshare provides nutritious, cooked meals for people facing hardship.

First Step

First Step focuses on providing a welcoming, non-judgemental environment for people who use drugs and alcohol and people living with mental distress through support from a unique, multi-disciplinary team.

An interesting thought was a quote in their recent newsletter from Johann Hari *Lost Connections* – about the connections that human beings need to be happy and healthy "the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, the opposite of addiction is connection."

Les Twentyman

Provides positive intervention for at-risk youth to create positive outcomes.

Servants

Servants Community Housing provides low-cost housing in Hawthorn and Kew.

The Florey Institute of Neuroscience & Mental Health

The Florey endeavours to discover more solutions to help advance knowledge and treatments of brain and mind diseases to improve quality of life.

Fred Hollows Foundation

Fred Hollows Foundation works towards eliminating avoidable blindness and improving Indigenous Australian health.

Women For Change

Women for Change works to provide tertiary education to improve the lives of disadvantaged girls in rural Kenya, Nepal and India.

Stock

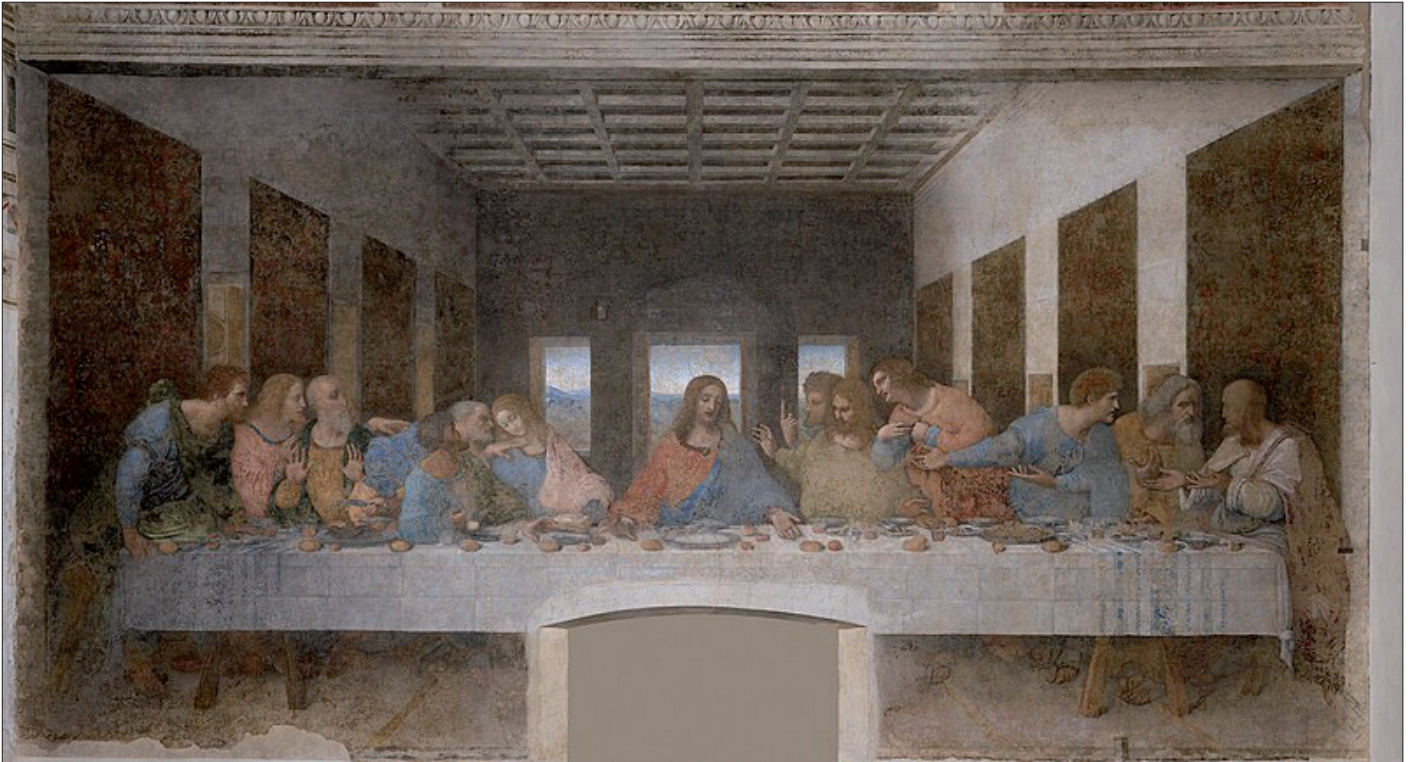
Much of the remaining stock from the Op Shop will be given to Uniting. They will pick it up when they have finished moving into their new warehouse. We will try to find appropriate homes for the remaining stock and fixtures.

Cathy and Alex

	UCA	Community
Local	Uniting \$2000	Fareshare \$1000 (x2) First Step \$1000 (x2) Les Twentyman \$1000 Servants \$1000
Australia	Frontier Services \$2000	Florey Institute \$1000
International	Uniting World \$1000	Act for Peace \$1000 Fred Hollows \$1000 Women for Change \$1000

Church calendar

February and March include Epiphany, Lent and ends with Easter Day. Special Days are Ash Wednesday, Annunciation of the Lord, and the days of Holy Week. We consider below the Last Supper through the eyes of the Gospel writer, the hymn composer and the artist.



The Gospel writer John 13: 21–27

²¹After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."²² His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. ²³One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. ²⁴Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." ²⁵Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

The hymn composer Frederick Pratt Green TiS 536

1. An upper room did our Lord prepare
for those he loved until the end:
and his disciples still gather there
to celebrate their risen friend.
2. A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:
to share his bread, his loving cup.
What ever burdens may bow us down,
he by his cross shall lift us up.

The artist (Leonardo da Vinci)

Jesus has just announced that one of the disciples will betray Him. He shows "dignity, aloofness and perfect calm", while the twelve are puzzled and talk among themselves.

Jesus is conspicuous because his centred image is the largest, is placed against the window, and is separated from the disciples. The disciples in contrast are huddled together.

The twelve disciples left to right are possibly Bartholomew, James the Lesser, Andrew, Judas, Peter, Thomas, James the Greater, Phillip, Matthew, Thaddeus and Simon.

Christ's right hand is reaching towards the same dish as Judas, reflecting verse 26 quoted at left while his left hand is indicating the bread.

Sources R. King, *Leonardo and the Last Supper*, Bloomsbury 2012. J. Wasserman, *Leonardo da Vinci*, Thames and Hudson 1992. Quote above is from Wasserman, p. 94.

3. And after supper he washed their feet,
for service, too, is sacrament.
In him our joy shall be made complete –
sent out to serve, as he was sent.
4. No end there is! We depart in peace.
He loves beyond the uttermost:
in every room in our Father's house
he will be there, as Lord and host.

The day I met the Pope

by Jane

I met Kathleen Carroll on the P&O's RMS *Strathnaver* travelling from Melbourne to London where we arrived on 1 January 1961. In August, we travelled through Europe by train and bus but mostly by hitch hiking which then was considered a safe and accepted practice.



Kathleen is the great, great grandniece of the nun who founded the order of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God – an Irish teaching order. After booking into a pensione in Rome, Kathleen telephoned the Convent and we were

invited for afternoon tea.

The nuns were thrilled to meet Kathleen and took many photos of her standing beside the large portrait of her ancestor. As a non-Catholic I simply basked in Kathleen's reflected glory.

I have a very good memory of the afternoon tea that followed as it was the first decent cup of tea I had had since leaving England. In Europe, at that time at least, if you ordered a cup of tea you received a cup of hot water with a tea bag on the saucer. Here we had a teapot full of tea made on the spot with boiling water and I have no doubt the teapot had been firstly warmed – pure joy! As soon as I had emptied my cup it was refilled by a nun who obviously recognised a tea addicted soul when she saw one.

The next day after breakfast we went sightseeing with one of the nuns as a guide. On that morning we saw the Vatican Radio station, the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel.

The nuns insisted we have lunch there each day and every morning they would assign a nun to take us sightseeing – no small ask in the middle of a very hot summer. The nuns were very good to us both. The nun who was most often assigned to us was Sister Mary Paul who was good company and had a wry sense of humour. I kept in touch with her for many years.

The nuns arranged for us to attend an audience with Pope John XXIII at his summer residence. In order to participate we had to be appropriately clad and had fun searching through a trunk of black clothing where we found black mantillas to cover our heads and long black gloves to cover our bare arms. There were no mirrors so we used our powder compacts to check how we were shaping up and Sister Mary Paul took this opportunity to sneak a forbidden look at herself. Arrangements were made for Sr Mary Paul to accompany us to the Pope's summer

residence in a chauffeured car.

Like most community halls it had a stage at one end of the hall. Although it was called a "private audience" there were at least 500 of us in attendance. Sister Mary Paul, Kathleen and I were privileged to be seated on the stage, indubitably due to Kathleen's connection with the Poor Servants of the Mother of God nuns.

The Pope was carried in on an ornate sedan chair followed by a hierarchy of clergy all splendidly robed for the occasion. At the rear was a small boy carrying a red velvet cushion with gold tassels. The reason for the cushion became clear when the Pope was transferred to his throne. His feet did not touch the floor and so were able to rest upon the cushion.

This occasion was an opportunity to receive a papal blessing in the form of a prayer printed on a card and signed by the Pope. I was able to mail one such card to a staunchly Catholic family who were our near neighbours 25 miles east of Warrnambool. After seeing the Pope, we visited the Catacombs and St Peter's Basilica. In the evening Kathleen and I went to the opera, *Aida*, and thoroughly enjoyed the spectacular performance in the magnificent outdoor theatre set in the ruins of the ancient Roman baths. A truly memorable evening.

Two days later on 14 August, we enjoyed the scenic bus drive from Rome to Florence stopping on the way for a guided tour of St Francis' Church. The next day in Florence we met two nuns, saw two churches, returning to the convent for lunch. In the evening, we were taken for a drive by an ex-pupil of the nuns.

The following morning we rose early to go shopping for leather handbags for our mothers and scarves for ourselves. At the end of the day we had supper at the convent and bid the nuns farewell.



The Pope's Summer Palace Castel Gandolfo, which Jane visited. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International licence.

Bible word

Love Part 4: Epistles, and Revelation – continued

Paul writes from prison to the **Ephesians** to comfort and encourage them to stay grounded in Christ in order to stay strong in the face of opposition. He prays a “purple” prayer, one that can be used as a personal prayer: “Being rooted and grounded in love, [you] may have power to comprehend . . . what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.” (3:18–19). “Be imitators of God . . . and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself” (5:1, 2). Various rules for living for different groups follow. The controversial “Wives submit to your husbands” (5:23) is followed by “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (5:25) and “He who loves his wife loves himself” (5:29). He finishes with, “Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love undying” (6:24).

Paul writes from prison in Rome to the **Philippians**, dear friends. His message is to rejoice in whatever circumstances one finds oneself. “Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved” (4:1).

To the **Colossians**, whom he never met, he writes to counteract their beliefs “which downgraded Jesus to some sort of angel . . . by showing that Jesus is none other than God and possesses the fullness of the eternal God”. (Living Bible): “Above all . . . put on love, which binds everything in perfect harmony” (3:14). To the **Thessalonians**, both letters are encouragement to continue to be faithful to Jesus Christ in the face of persecution. “Put on the breastplate of faith and love (1 Thes 5:8). “May God direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ” (2 Thes 3:5).

Timothy has been left by Paul with the Ephesians to correct problems in Christian doctrine and living. Paul writes to encourage Timothy to live wholly to the glory of God. “The love of money is the root of all evil. But you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love” (1 Tim 6:11). “Shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love (2 Tim 2:22).

Titus was left on Crete to ordain elders. Paul sets out the requirements of such a position. “But a bishop, as God’s steward, must be

blameless . . . a lover of goodness” (1:8).

Philemon had a house church in Colosse and owned a slave, Onesimus, who ran away to Rome where he was converted by Paul. Paul now sends him back to Philemon with this letter in which he points out that Onesimus is now a Christian brother and must be forgiven. “Though I am bold enough to command you to do what is required, yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you”. **Hebrews** is written to Jewish Christians to show that Christ is superior in every way to what the Jews believed. “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord . . . for the Lord disciplines him whom he loves” (12:5, 6 from Prov 3:11–12).

James writes to Jewish Christians to provide them with practical instructions in the Christian life. He doesn’t use the word love but states that “faith without works is dead” (2:17), which is the other side of being saved by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Peter writes to various “exiles of the Dispersion” (1 Pet 1:1) to encourage them to steadfastness in suffering and to grow in the faith. “Without having seen [Jesus Christ] you love him” (1 Pet 1:8). “Make every effort to supplement your faith with . . . love” (2 Pet 1:5, 8).

They are all written to personal friends to encourage them in their Christian life. As with his gospel, so in these epistles, **John** is not afraid to use the word love. “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God” (1 John 4:7). “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” (1 John 4:18). “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). “Love one another. And this is love, that we follow [Christ’s] commandments . . . follow love.” (2 John 6,7). “It is a loyal thing you do when you render any service to the brethren, especially to strangers, who have testified to your love before the church” (3 John 5, 6).

Jude, brother to James, writes to warn “Christians everywhere” against false teachers reminding about the judgement of God on them. He reminds his “dear friends” to “Stay always within the boundaries of God’s love” (1: 21).

The Revelation of John “is a glorious book show[ing] the once humiliated Jesus, the Lamb

of God slain for the sins of the world, taking control of history at the time of the end" (*The Living Bible*). John had a vision while exiled on the island of Patmos which he writes down as his Revelations. It starts with letters to seven churches where he relays messages from Jesus. Jesus commends the strengths of these churches but condemns their failings: To the leader of the church in Ephesus write "You have abandoned the love you had at first" (2:4). To the church leader in Thyatira write "I know

your works, your love and faith" (2:19). To the church leaders in Laodicea write "Those who I love I reprove and chasten" (2:19). The rest of the book deals with visions of the judgement on evil. Love is not mentioned but the glory of the Lord is celebrated when the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven. "He who testifies to these things says 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (22:20).

Andrea

Pipe organ on the move

Over the years the pipe organ at Mt Waverley Uniting Church has been a blessing to several congregations since it was built in 1961. Cliff Harding tells the story of the organ, and how it is now time for it to be a blessing for another congregation.

In 1983, the South Essendon Uniting Church donated their pipe organ to the then High Street Road Uniting Church, Mount Waverley. The organ had been made in 1961 by English organ builders J W Walker & Sons, as one of their several "off-the-shelf" models – low cost yet versatile, with 2 full-size manuals and pedals plus a variety of stops. It was originally donated to the South Essendon Methodist Church by the Gilbertson family.

In 1982 the church was sold to the Salvation Army and the congregation moved over the road to St Johns UC. The Salvation Army did not require the organ.

Geoff Willis (a former organist at St Johns and occasionally at South Essendon) learnt of its availability late in 1982 and, aware of its

potential, arranged for the organ to be on permanent loan to the church for as long as it remains a place of worship.

In 1983, with individual donations and pledges to cover the anticipated costs, work began.

The organ was transported in bits and pieces in a convoy of cars and trailers. The platform on which the three hundred pipes sit was designed by Howard Fried, and the front display ("dummy") pipes was constructed to scale by Novar Birrell, using PVC and painted with real gold-leaf donated by Balwyn UC. Indistinguishable from the real thing! The instrument was re-dedicated in August 1983, with Gilbertson family members present.

It has been described by organ aficionados as one of the best of its kind in Melbourne.

Our congregation recently celebrated 40 years since the arrival of the organ, and has experienced much musical and worshipful joy over the years from having such a fine organ.

The High Street Road Uniting Church congregation has recently joined with St John's Uniting Church in Mount Waverley Village, which is currently undergoing renovations. The new congregation is called Mount Waverley Uniting Church, and it is expected that the move will take place by mid next year.

Options for the organ are being considered in conjunction with St John's Essendon.

from Newsbeat

Ministry of flowers

Cannas from South Caulfield



Envirotip

Enviro Friendly Weed Killer

½ cup Epsom Salts

1 litre white vinegar

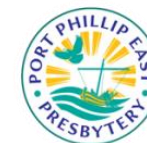
1 tablespoon detergent (dishwasher liquid)

Mix together. Can be halved. Cannot be stored so must be made fresh and used immediately.

Patricia

St John's Uniting Church, Elsternwick

Roster & diary dates for February and March 2024



February	4 Epiphany 5*	11 Transfiguration of Jesus	18 Lent 1	25 Lent 2	Diary Dates	
Leader	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan	Cathy McNicol	February birthdays 7 Ray 20 Jane 27 Pauline	March birthdays 12 Tsai 19 Patricia 20 Eric
Lectionary Readings	Is 40:21–31; Ps 147:1–11, 20c; 1 Cor 9:16–23; Mk 1:29–39	2 Kgs 2:1–12; Ps 50:1–6 2 Cor 4:3–6 Mk 9:2–9	Gn 9:8–17 Ps 25:1–10; 1 Pt 3:18–22; Mk 1:9–15	Gn 17:1–7, 15–16; Ps 22:23–31; Rom 4:13–25; Mk 8:31–38 or Mk 9:2–9	February events 11 Pancake Day 11 Sunday Nite Live @6 East Room 12 Church Council @3.30 23 Friday Friends @12.30	March events 10 Sunday Live @6 East Room 11 Church Council 22 Friday Friends @12.30 24 Annual General Meeting and lunch
Prayer	Andrea	Cathy	Audrey	Patricia	Weekly events Craft and Chat Mondays @1–3 Chatty Café Wednesdays @10–12 * Holy Communion	Weekly events Craft and Chat Mondays @1–3 Chatty Café Wednesdays @10–12 * Holy Communion
Greeters	Raj	Wendy	Raj	Colin		
Readers	Alex	Patricia	Don	Audrey		
Data Projector	Cathy	Geoff	Cathy	Geoff		
Steward/Offering	Andrea/Raj	Cathy/Raj	Patricia/Raj	Andrea/Colin		
Morning Tea	Pauline/Patricia	Luchee/Colin	Denise/Audrey	Alex/Rhonda		
Flowers	Pauline	Audrey	Alex	Rhonda		

March	3 Lent 3*	10 Lent 4	17 Lent 5	24 Liturgy of the Palms	29 Good Friday	31 Easter Day
Leader	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan	Cathy McNicol	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan	Rev Dr Lynette Dungan
Lectionary Readings	Ex 20:1–17; Ps 19; 1 Cor 1:18–25; Jn 2:13–22	Nm 21:4–9; Ps 107:1–3, 17–22; Eph 2:1–10; Jn 3:14–21	Jer 31:31–34; Ps 51:1–12 or Ps 119:9–16; Heb 5:5–10; Jn 12:20–33	Ps 118:1–2, 19–29; Mk 11:1–11 or Jn 12:12–16	Is 52:13–53:12; Ps 22; Heb 10:16–25 or Heb 4:14–16, 5:7–9; Jn 18:1–19:42	Acts 10:34–43 or Is 25:6–9; Ps 118:1–2, 14–24; 1 Cor 15:1–11 or Acts 10:34–43; Jn 20:1–18 or Mk 16:1–8
Prayer	Andrea	Patricia	Greg	Cathy	Patricia	Audrey
Greeters	Colin	Wendy	Colin	Raj	Raj	Rhonda
Readers	Don	Andrea	Audrey	Don	Alex	Patricia
Data Projector	Cathy	Greg	Geoff	Greg	Geoff	Geoff
Steward/Offering	Colin/Andrea	Raj/Andrea	Colin/Patricia	Cathy/Raj	Raj/Patricia	Andrea/Raj
Morning Tea	Rhonda/Alex	Audrey/Luchee	Denise/Alex	Patricia/Colin	—	Patricia/Audrey
Flowers	Pauline	Audrey	Rhonda	Alex	—	Patricia