



Autumn 2018

Introduction

Your autumn newsletter is as late in arriving as the season it represents, but is well worth the wait for several reasons. Chief amongst them is a generous contribution by Wes Campbell remembered by many of the congregation as our long-term minister and friend at this church. We invited Wes to tell us something about his current exhibition of paintings in Castlemaine where he and Beverley now live, but the reason for contacting him now is that the special theme of our newsletter is Parkinson's Disease (PD). Rosemary Wearing has written a poem, which graphically describes PD as it affects her dear husband Alec and, as both Wes and I have the condition I thought we would contribute too although not necessarily directly on the subject.

Far more familiar, important territory is covered by Craig our current minister about the Lenten season, and Heather Mathew writes about Brother Peter. Tim O'Connor tells us what Church Council has been up to since we last heard, and our diary puts us in readiness for important markers of the Church year ahead.

As well as thanking our regular stalwarts, especially producer Rod Mummery for his patience, I must acknowledge that Rosemary's poem is at the heart of this newsletter. Wes's extraordinary art was a bonus that could not have been expected.

Please take your time reading this newsletter; it is worth every moment you can give it.

Suzanne Yanko
Editor

Lent's new look

by Craig Thompson



This Lent we're experimenting with a new 'look' to worship, although it is not just a matter of aesthetics. The icons, which have appeared in our worship space link us to ancient ways of approaching God which are quite strange to more austere Protestant thinking about where and how God is present in the world. Like most significant cultural differences, it takes some time for understanding then appreciation to grow; a season such as Lent seemed a good period for a first sustained taste of Christian iconography in the worship space!

Our worship is central to our life as a congregation, such that the congregation grows and is strengthened as its worship develops. Some time after Easter we'll join together to reflect on the experience of worshiping in the presence of the icons. It will be important to hear what everyone has made of them. More than



that, I hope that over the course of the coming year we will have a number of opportunities further to discuss and experiment in some of the things we do or have in our worship space.

None of this is about novelty for novelty's sake. It is, in part, about discovering things which other parts of the church might know but which we have forgotten and, in part, about what particular shape our worship might take if it is to be faithful to the church's calling in our particular time and place.

Try to make the most of whatever is different from before – including the icons – and then let's see, together, what we will make of it!

News from Church Council

by Tim O'Connor, Chair of Church Council

Do This The Eucharist in the Uniting Church

If you have read the February edition of Crosslight, you will have appreciated the full-page article by Craig, which invites Uniting Church congregations to consider celebrating the Eucharist weekly. At Mark the Evangelist we greatly value this practice and probably all the more so, since we know it is not common in the Uniting Church.

Craig writes, 'The frequency of celebration, in fact, is not quite the point. The issue is what it is the Eucharist brings, and if it brings anything that matters, why we are satisfied to receive that blessing only monthly or quarterly, when in most faith communities weekly reception would be entirely feasible. Why do we typically separate Word and Sacrament in this way?' Craig has launched 'Do This The Eucharist in the Uniting Church' as a program of Mark the Evangelist with the collaboration of a few other ministers. Together with Robert Gribben he is preparing some resources to support congregations.

Lenten Study

This year's Lenten Study has taken the form of a five-week course of readings, reflection and prayer based on Pope Francis' 2013 encyclical The Joy of the Gospel. Led jointly by Craig and the priest of St Mary's Anglican Church, Wednesday evening sessions have been attended by members of both congregations and preceded by a light, shared meal.

Mark the Evangelist Futures Project

A new Project Control Group (PCG) was formed last September for the next stage of the Futures Project. Church Council appointed Craig Thompson, Rod Mummery, Greg Hill and Lauren Mosso as the Congregation's representatives. Lauren resigned in March due to her election to the demanding position of Chair of the Presbytery's Pastoral Relations Committee. David Radcliffe has been appointed to the Finance and Property Committee and the PCG in her place.

In June last year Synod Property Board decided that, before we could proceed with the Congregation's preferred property option, it wished to investigate the option of having the site developed with a ground lease on all or part of the site. Gauge Property expressed interest, but after receiving advice from heritage architects, withdrew their offer for a ground lease in February, considering the option unviable. The PCG will now proceed with our preferred property option, concentrating first on the validation of the sub-division of the site.

Comments, queries and suggestions are invited by the Church Council: Gaye Champion (Chair, UnitingCare Hotham Mission), Michael Champion (Elder), Belinda Hopper (Elder and Secretary), Gus MacAulay (Elder), Rod Mummery (Elder and Treasurer), Tim O'Connor (Elder and Chair), Maureen Postma (Elder), Craig Thompson (Minister) and Alan Wilkinson (MTEFP Coordinator).

Oasis of Peace Behind the Wall: Bethlehem University in the Holy Land

by Heather R. Mathew

Report on the address by Brother Peter Bray (Vice-Chancellor) at Mark the Evangelist Uniting Church, North Melbourne, on 22nd February 2018.



Bethlehem University is the only Catholic University in the Holy Land where Palestinians of all faiths, or none, can come to study. Brother Peter is often asked what an unashamedly Catholic university is doing in a country where less than two percent of the population is Christian. With so few Christians, what is the aim? Brother Peter's response is to ask people to think back two thousand years to when Jesus walked that land; there were no Christians then. So what was he doing? Brother Peter suggests that the answer lies in St John's gospel (10:10), 'I have come that they may have life – life in all its fullness'. That is what Jesus was doing and that is exactly what Bethlehem University is doing in establishing an environment and an opportunity for students to gain a quality education, develop the attitudes and acquire the values that will enable them to live as fully as they possibly can, despite the restrictions of the occupation.

Some students shared their experiences via video clip interviews of what it is like to study at Bethlehem University. A young Muslim graduate from Hebron said that she was not the same girl as the one who began her studies at Bethlehem University'. Now she sees that she has possibilities for the future; she has learned what it is to be fully human. Lara, a Christian student from Bethlehem spoke of how Bethlehem University gives her hope when things get tough.

Forty-six per cent of the students come from Jerusalem. Each day they face different obstacles. When they get on a bus to come to Bethlehem University, they do not know if they will get there on time for class. They do not know if their bus will be stopped by the Israeli military once or twice or even three times, or not at all. The deliberately unpredictable and chaotic structures instituted by the Israeli military cause great psychological insecurity. Brother Peter spoke of a student who routinely keeps her bus fare in her hand so that she does not have to open her bag near a checkpoint where she could risk being shot by an Israeli soldier on the suspicion that she is pulling out a knife or weapon from her bag.

How then can Palestinians respond to their life under the Israeli occupation? They can only resist, and to exist is to resist' is a slogan that has appeared on the Separation Wall that divides Israel from the West Bank. A consequence of activism, however, can result in dire circumstances for individuals and entire families and this, too, can impact on students at Bethlehem University.

In the complex situation of conflict, Brother Peter explained that Bethlehem University strives to, 'do what we can with what we have, where we are' and so it does three things. Firstly, it provides a safe environment on the campus, where there will be no gun in the face, no arbitrary arrest, no interrogation. Secondly, it provides security to the students in showing that they are cared for by staff who aim to be older brothers and sisters to them. Thirdly, Bethlehem University offers a predictable world within its campus lectures will be on time, students can feel that this world is secure. A safe, caring and predictable environment fosters peaceful hearts, minds, people, Brother Peter explained. Students are not taught a language of hate but learn how they can use their minds, not weapons, to challenge the occupation.



Brother Peter quoted from Bonhoeffer that 'silence in the face of evil is itself evil' and from Einstein's wisdom that it is solidarity, not charity, that supports the quest for justice. It is impossible not to express that solidarity for, in the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 'If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor'. In this spirit the Board of Regents of the University has set itself a challenge for 2018, to consider how to address the many injustices faced by the Palestinians.



In summary, Bethlehem University seeks to be an oasis of peace, a beacon of hope and a provider of quality higher education that equips young Palestinians to become leaders in their communities in the hope that a new era of peace may grow in this troubled land.

Presented by the Uniting Church in Australia Congregation of Mark the Evangelist, North Melbourne, in collaboration with the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network Inc. (PIEN)

www.pien.org.au.

For more information about Bethlehem University & ways to engage or support its work visit www.Bethlehem.edu.

Special section: Living with Parkinson's Disease

Poem by Rosemary Wearing

Oh Brain how to address you? I'm afraid I do not know?
You were for years a friend but in the past five years – a Foe.
(Were you perhaps a Baron, or a Squire of some repute
In bygone times? No matter, Your great power I'll not refute).
You've ruled from inside Alec's skull, for years You were benign
But PD with its minions (Lewy bodies) now define
His total body, sense of self, -articulation's gone,
AND Brain, you've changed confusion dwells where brilliance it once shone.
When Alec was a young child, he sought knowledge, and he showed

A constant curiosity and in his brain he stowed
So many facts from books he read, his family weren't surprised
When he announced his dream to study overseas realized.
He left the farm for Illinois, and later on to Yale,
And over 40 years back here, you, Brain, You did not fail
To give him deep fulfillment in his academic life,
Until the year 2002 we saw the signs of strife
From Parkinson's emerging, which is when we felt the chill
Of how your Power so positive would soon drag him downhill.
With PD now advanced, You demonstrate an evil strength
and turned his life to chaos, You pursue to any length
All thinking, body movements, without warning, – thus we feel
Your role in Alec's life is now one 'gainst which we must steel.
You mock attempts to plan each day, to guard against a fall,
A timetable for visits, and appointments we must stall.
You cruelly caused him to retire so much against his will,
Because his voice was way too soft for lecturing, and still
You caused a fall when on a tram which put a further end
to daily visits to his Office when he used to wend
his way through Carlton Gardens, and in Readings he would pause
perchance to buy a book (that small action would give cause
to stop and buy an apple scroll!), from whence to the twelfth floor
of Redmond Barry building where he'd sit with open door
and welcome any chance to talk, to listen and advise
to all who entered I am sure they always found him wise.
But You, Brain, gave him but two hours before fatigue took o'er
So home – with Alec feeling satisfied, replenished to his core
The farm on Yorke Peninsula he misses very much,
It's always been His Home, the place where he can be in touch
With all that is essentially him, his roots and find a role
for hands to work in partnership with land and inner soul,
each day has its own rhythm, one must always be alert
to all that nature throws before you, be it stock or dirt!
He loved to show and teach the girls the lessons he once had
To move the sheep, to drive the truck, e'en if mistakes were bad
The learning curve was meaningful, their strengths came to the fore,
and round the dinner table through long chats they learnt the lore
of farming folk, of history, of when neighbours would appear
to quietly help when things were crook, yes, help was always near.
You, Brain, have thus dictated no more visits to the farm
Are possible, no more can gain that deep and inner calm
From walking down the race at night, and sniffing the sea air,
nor to the heavy star filled sky well filled with peace can stare,
Nor feel the limestones roll beneath his feet whilst hearing sounds
Of sheep close by, (can smell them too!). That peace no more abounds.

All that is years ago, now, and such things are only dreams,
Folk from that precious world drop in, and while they're here it seems
He lights up and absorbs the talk, empowered to defy
Your potent and destructive force which wonderfully doth lie
Unable to step in and bring confusion or distress.
Such victories are few and brief but so sweet nonetheless!

Brain, you keep bringing challenges, these battles daily test
his calm, his sense of humour, but his courage does not rest.
Incontinence it plays havoc even though we do prepare
For accidents at any hour, and sleeplessness we share.
we pray you'll give support when Alec's legs refuse to move

But can we e'er rely on You? Oh no, You have to prove
that You're the Boss and so we have to let You play your game
of creating uncertainty which often ends in shame.
Its thanks to You and PD that he cannot read a thing,
Nor feed himself, nor swallow well, he now can hardly sing!
He can't spontaneously arise and move to sit elsewhere,
For every wish, intention, whim, I his carer must be there.
if only You and all those fickle Lewy bodies could
give Alec back some dignity! A clearer understanding would
remind him, Brain, how years ago, in research he did thrive
and helped his colleagues, students, staff for excellence to strive.
If only You'd cooperate and give him some reward
of increased strength, mobility to let him move toward
a chance to visit grandchildren, his daughter, who have been
in USA for 9 long years, and for 5 years unseen
by him, since trips abroad are now not his to entertain.
and they've got little money, and their allergies, Sir Brain
contribute to a bleak conclusion, no long flights by plane.
Since travel now's impossible, what other choice is there
for face-to face encounters? So into their lives can share
Their everyday experiences, to listen and to see
Them grow into young adults (two are now, and two will be.)
You taunt us with suggestions, why not skype we hear you cry?
Full well you know that skyping's something very hard to try,
His soft voice and bowed head must certain difficulties create
For those who're on the other side- and puts him in a state
Of despair and frustration and it leads us both to fear
we're slipping off of the radar of their world although it's clear
the loving bonds are ever there, these bonds will always grow.
Your answer, Baron Brain, is that its ageing, – yes we know!
But PD grimly makes the process prematurely grow.
Forgive this momentary cry as carer, – yes, I know
That were it cancer, motor neurone, there'd be severe pain.
To date, he can feel comfortable, and peace of mind attain,
It's just so hard to watch your tricks which unannounced are there
Despite his hope and efforts, your games lead him to despair!!

But wait, Squire Brain, I'd like to reassure you there's so much
That Alec can enjoy and feel he's keeping still in touch
With family and friends both here as well as overseas,
Thanks to their visits, emails, calls, which never cease to please!
These contacts are so rich with humour, wit and tenderness
And all throughout You oft reveal Your precious specialness.

Wes Campbell's exhibition

Transfiguration

[literally: change, complete transformation]

An Exhibition of Paintings by Wes Campbell

Phee Broadway Theatre Foyer Castlemaine

3 February 30 March 2018



Transfiguration: An Exhibition is a response to a key Christian narrative traditionally observed on the 6th of August, as Transfiguration. The 6th of August, 1945, is remembered as the date of the atomic destruction of Hiroshima.

The double focus of this exhibition brings together the brutal death of Jesus in his confrontation with powers that oppress and destroy, and the claim that his light' has the power to transform life. The paintings depict both the suffering world and transforming life-giving light.

Wes Campbell is a retired Uniting Church Minister, theologian and painter in oils and acrylics. Apart from one season at the Victorian Artists Society, Wes is self-taught, having learned the craft of painting by observing the art of Australian artists, such as Arthur Boyd, William Drysdale, Fred Williams, Guy Grey Smith.

In the 1990s, encouraged by Janet Llewellyn of Quality Framers, North Melbourne, he began to show his work in both solo and group exhibitions. His major concern is to engage our contemporary world theologically, much as a preached sermon. He has reflected on painting as a form of prayer'. Australian landscapes play a central role in his work.

Supported by the Uniting Church, Wes has been resident painter at the Wesley Theological Seminary (Washington DC), Andover Newton Theological Seminary (Boston), Cosmopolitan Church (Manila).

Wes comments: "It is a risky business putting up such work for viewing. Good, though, otherwise it languishes in my garage at home.

"Such work also lets me do what I have done as a preacher over decades of holding theological themes with contemporary threads of justice and peace."

(Among many acknowledgements of supporters, Wes includes: "For Heroes who deal with Parkinson's, thanks for your friendship.")

Like Wes and Rosemary and Alec, I have found the friendship of the Parkinson's community to be a source of great comfort and practical help, not least in the Dance for Parkinson's class I literally stumbled on at the Camberwell Uniting Church every Friday many months ago.

The media has lately taken an interest but as I have missed the recording of two videos for TV it seems I won't be giving up the day job soon!

Finally, a look ahead to important dates for your diary.
Enjoy your Easter chocolate quite early this year!

Best wishes,
Suzanne

Noticeboard

Easter Services:

Palm-Passion Sunday 25 March 10AM

Maundy Thursday 29 March 7:30PM

Good Friday 30 March 10AM

Easter Vigil 31 March from 8PM

Easter Day 1 April 10AM

15 April MtE 2017 AGM

29 April MtE luncheon following worship



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