



Mount Martha Uniting Church

Keeping in Touch

December 2025

Sunday Worship: 10.00am

Minister: Rev. Peter Wiltshire Contact: Mobile 0425 747 437 Email pwiltshire@ymail.com

DATES FOR THE DIARY

MEETINGS

Executive Leadership Group Bimonthly

Pastoral Care Group
Bimonthly

Worship Committee
As required

Mission / Outreach Group
As required

OTHER ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

Honeypot Play Group
Monday 9.00—12.00

Bible Study / Discussion Group
Tuesday Fortnightly:
5.00—6.30pm

Table Tennis
Tuesday 1.30-3.00pm

Badminton
Tuesday 7.30—9.00pm

Working Bees
Productive Garden / Peace Trail / General Maintenance
Monthly: Tues. 9.00-12.00

Days for Girls
Monthly, 1st Friday

Dine Out
Wednesday Monthly

Men's Coffee Group
Friday fortnightly 10.30am

Ladies Coffee Group -
Friday Fortnightly 10.30am

REFLECTIONS, CELEBRATIONS AND THANKS

What an eventful year! As we approach another Christmas and look back at the past year, it is wonderful to reflect on the many events, happenings and achievements of 2025, the reinstatement of our KIT magazine being one of them.

The first issue of KIT began as an opportunity to **CELEBRATE** and to **PROMOTE** the life of our church and to **SHARE** aspects of our lives and faith journeys with each other. Now with the publication of our third issue of KIT we can reflect on our journey over the past year and rejoice in the many events that have taken place, in our personal lives and in the life of our church.

In this issue we thank God for his continuing guidance as we celebrate events such as:

- special church services
- community outreach
- growth of faith and worship
- and the rich church heritage we have today thanks to the vision and dedication of our pioneers.

We also thank all who have contributed to our magazine. Your efforts have undoubtedly provided a blessing for many people.



May you know God's presence and rich blessings in your preparations for Christmas and in the year ahead.

From the Minister's Desk

Read Rev. Peter's message—Page 2

Recent Events

- Community Outreach Pg. 3
- White Ribbon Day Pg.6 ...

Did You Know?

History Continues ...

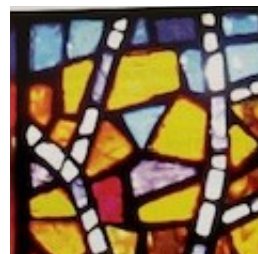
- Mt Martha UC Windows Pg. 13

Who's Who at MMUC?

Ruth and Wal R. - Life's journey with Frontier Services Work Parties Pg 9 ...

Coming Soon - Christmas

- Christmas Reflections Pg.16



And
there's
more ...



A WORD FROM OUR MINISTER

The Slow Work of Advent

Trusting the Slow Path in a Season of Haste

*"Come all of you who are thirsty,
come to the waters, and you
who have no money come, buy
and eat!" (Isaiah 55:1)*

The words of the ancient prophet Isaiah are counter-cultural in a heavily consumer-driven society. This is especially the case as we enter the season of Advent, preparing for Christmas.

Apart from the consumerism that envelops us at this time of the year, it's also the distraction of the pace of events happening that can overtake us.

Our calendars fill with obligations. I find myself making Christmas lists and buying gifts while simultaneously trying to tell myself that it's not about stuff and acquiring things.

St. Ignatius warns that both riches and haste are signs of the dark spirit, and I see that spirit everywhere in these weeks—including in my own chest when I realise how much I still need to accomplish!

But Advent offers us a different invitation. While the world around us treats this season like a maze to navigate as efficiently as possible, or as something to achieve, Advent

asks us to slow down and trust the winding path, like a labyrinth. We're called to practice waiting rather than rushing, to prepare not by doing more but by being present to these four weeks. The season itself is the gift, not something to get through on our way to the "real" celebration.

So, this year, what if we let ourselves walk at God's pace instead of the world's? What if we trusted that the slow work of Advent—inefficient and unhurried—is exactly where God wants to meet us? The path may wind and double back on itself, taking us away from where we think we want to go. But that meandering is purposeful. All we need to do is show up and take one step at a time, trusting that God meets us in our imperfect attempts at presence.

As you journey through Advent, poet Mary Oliver offers the following poem to assist with our embrace of the slow work of Advent.

Invitation

Mary Oliver

Oh, do you have time
to linger
for just a little while
out of your busy
and very important day
for the goldfinches
that have gathered
in a field of thistles

for a musical battle,
to see who can sing
the highest note,
or the lowest,
or the most expressive of mirth,
or the most tender?
Their strong, blunt beaks
drink the air
as they strive
melodiously
not for your sake
and not for mine
and not for the sake of winning
but for sheer delight and gratitude—
believe us, they say,
it is a serious thing
just to be alive
on this fresh morning
in the broken world.
I beg of you,
do not walk by
without pausing
to attend to this
rather ridiculous performance.
*It could mean something.
It could mean everything.
It could be what Rilke meant, when
he wrote:
You must change your life.*

Grace and Peace

Reverend Peter Wiltshire

A CELEBRATION OF SHARED COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Sunday

On Sunday 31st August we hosted an array of community group members as we celebrated and thanked many who volunteer and serve our community. This was the third year of celebrating Community Sunday at Mt Martha Uniting Church and we greatly value the growing links and associations providing mutual opportunities.

The **Mt Martha CFA** representatives provided an overview of their work and fire safety, ahead of our fundraising luncheon with \$350 raised for their ongoing work.



Mornington Community Support Centre were delighted to again receive our generous contribution of groceries and some of our fresh produce from the community courtyard for their work amongst the homeless and needy in our local area. (Well done everyone for these contributions) All attending were invited to attend their "by donation" café at the Support Centre.



It was a joy to hear from two **Interact students from Balcombe Grammar** who spoke of their opportuni-

ties for community service through the student Rotary programme which Peter Wiltshire has heralded. They also spoke of the new confidence and sense of purpose it has given them. They specifically are supporting the Women's Refuge project "Moonah House".



Many rewarding morning tea conversations followed with church members and with Peter Rawlings, also representing Rotary.



The **New Peninsula Men's Shed** described the process of manufacture and delivery of Primary School Buddy Benches manufactured with timber sourced from Mt Martha Uniting Church wooden pews. What a great use for our decommissioned pews!



The **Mornington Peninsula Welsh Ladies Choir** spoke of their forthcoming fundraising concert at our church (Moonah House Project). We announced our intention to waive a hiring fee and to also donate \$100 to this cause. (Since then their amazing concert has occurred and raised in excess of \$1500) For anyone who missed the concert our own Ruth Stuetgen is now a singing member!

A CELEBRATION OF SHARED COMMUNITY ACTION ... Continued.

Lisa Fitzgerald from the **Mornington Peninsula Koala Conservation (MPKC)** group inspired us with news of their 100 thousandth tree planted in 2025! The passion evident for her volunteer work, propagating and planting to create Koala friendly corridors on the Mornington Peninsula was truly inspirational and she always looks to see the progress of our Manna Gums and Peppermint Gums growing vigorously around the church property since donation of these from MPKC in 2023.

Although it takes around 7 years for a tree to become of interest to Koalas, we are heartened by the sightings since then of a Koala in Uralla Drive by our current Manse Tenants and in the driveway of Graham and Maree Walker!

Four Hundred Dollars from takings on our hall mission table were donated to MPKC. We also announced our plan for a family friendly Bush Dance in the Church Hall next March / April as a fun fundraiser to support their ongoing work.



The **Honey Pots Playgroup**, though not represented, was thanked for its exceptional ongoing work (supported weekly by MMUC in our Hall) providing a safe and stimulating space for pre-school children and their attending guardian (parent/grandparent). Jess Harris who has initiated and led this programme over the past 2 years was acknowledged and formal appreciation is anticipated at the end of the year as she completes her time serving this group, due to her

own growing and soon-to-be school-age children. Our own Anne Hill and Margaret Barker (supported by Jill Dunn) have provided invaluable support over the course of this playgroup – Thankyou!!!!

A **Days for Girls** presentation by Ruth Dickinson reminded us of the Mt Martha Uniting origins of this life changing initiative for Girls in third world countries with the manufacture of re-usable sanitary products. With a number of our MMUC members continuing to support this programme which is now at Koorootang it is fabulous that we continue to be part of making a real difference to real lives with this invaluable outreach.



Janet H. spoke of the work of **MND Victoria** and the **MND monthly support group** which has been meeting over the past year at MMUC. Attention was also drawn to the looming **MMUC Walk For a Cause Community Walk** at Mornington Park in collaboration with MND Victoria to raise awareness, provide support and encouragement and vital funds for the ongoing work of MND Victoria.



The service was followed by a community luncheon with much more sharing of thoughts, ideas and appreciation. All in all it was an uplifting Sunday which we hope to repeat and build on in 2026.

Article contributed by Peter Hough.

Mt Martha UC Walk for a Cause 2025

MND COMMUNITY WALK

Support and Fundraising

On Sunday 5th October Mt Martha Uniting Church hosted its 3rd annual Walk for a Cause. This year, in conjunction with MND Victoria, it supported and walked alongside the MND community, in an event aimed to show support and raise awareness of MND and raise funds for the work of MND Victoria.



Park. Past and present colleagues and friends, family members and individuals with MND or a current or past connection with a loved one with MND, gathered in unity, to **celebrate life and courage of the human spirit**. Some gathered to **remember and reflect**.



Background work by Mt Martha Uniting Church involved initial planning, engagement with MND Victoria, event permits, logistics planning, tables, chairs and marquee provision and infrastructure set up and pack up.

Over 200 people gathered from the wider community to walk, talk, share stories and embrace on a grey October day at Mornington

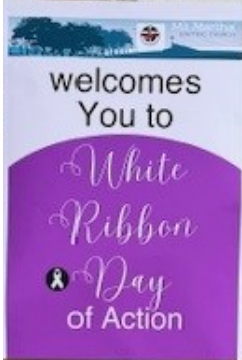


The Mt Martha Uniting Church Community were well represented in a show of love and prayerful support.

Those unable to attend sent messages of encouragement, prayers were offered at the morning service at Mt Martha and many contributed through generous donations. **Over \$17,500** has been raised for the work of MND Victoria.

WHITE RIBBON DAY OF ACTION

A Powerful Gathering at Mt Martha UC



On Saturday 29 November, Mt Martha Uniting Church once again opened its doors to host the **White Ribbon Day of Action**—and

the response was extraordinary. Guests streamed into the church to hear from a panel of four speakers, and to stand together for a future free from violence against women.

This is the **third year** our church has hosted this globally significant event, joining a worldwide movement now active in more than **60 countries**.

White Ribbon began in the early 1990s in Canada and has grown into the world's largest initiative led by men and boys, working to end gender-based violence. Every year, **International White Ribbon Day** on 25 November marks the beginning of **16 Days of Activism**, concluding on 10 December - **International Human Rights Day**.

By hosting this event, our church continues to live out the Uniting Church's mission to advocate for **justice, equality, dignity, and respect for all people**.



The gathering itself was beautifully diverse—women and men from their twenties to their eighties filled the space. It was especially heartening to see so many men present (around 15!), honouring the origins and purpose of the White Ribbon movement.

Our panel included voices from:

- **Mental Health Safety Net**
- **Victoria Police Family Violence Response Unit**
- **Moonah House Crisis Accommodation - opening 2026**
- **Three Sides of the Coin Theatre Project**



In the audience were local MPs, representatives from Bendigo Bank, the Mornington Peninsula Shire and Frankston Council Family Violence Prevention Collaborative, Victoria Police members, the



Men's Shed, local businesses and community members from both near and far. Even a guest flew in from Sydney to be part of the day. We were also blessed to have **Presbytery Minister Anneke Oppewal** with us.



There were moments of deep emotion as 3 survivors bravely shared personal stories of trauma, recovery, and the impact of gambling-related harm. A powerful piece of music, played live on the piano, offered a moving glimpse into one person's healing journey through art.

Our guests were invited to help paint the **red bench**, lovingly built by the Men's Shed using timber from our old pews—a symbol encouraging conversations about family violence.

They walked the **peace trail**, paused in the **rose garden**, and enjoyed the tranquillity of our grounds. And yes—our resident kookaburra made its usual cheerful appearance.

WHITE RIBBON DAY OF ACTION Continued ...

What made the day truly unforgettable was the **overwhelming support from the Mt Martha congregation and beyond.**

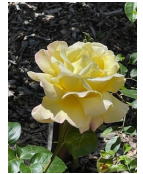
So many gave their time and energy—delivering flyers, preparing the grounds, baking, cooking, cleaning, shopping, setting up, packing down, arranging flowers, creating displays, managing tech,

offering emotional support, and giving generously in support of Moonah House. Every act, big or small, helped make this event meaningful.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed—including those who captured the day through thoughtful videography and photography.

This White Ribbon Day of Action was a day to remember—a day to reflect with gratitude and to envision how, together, we can continue building a safer, kinder community for all.

Ruth Stuetngen



A POSITIVE SHOW OF SUPPORT, WORKING TOGETHER TO ENCOURAGE CARING RELATIONSHIPS IN FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY



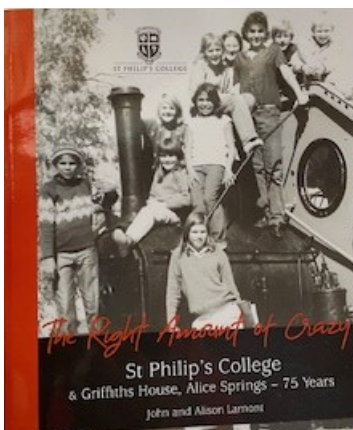
FRONTIER SERVICES

Our Ongoing Support for Outback Australians



In September we were delighted to welcome Reverend John Lamont to our Frontier Services Church Service. John has been involved in services to Outback Australia over many years and is well known to many of our congregation, not only through his ministry at MMUC, but also through his role in Frontier Services.

John has had extensive involvement in working parties to outback Australia and the maintenance of St Philip's College in Alice Springs. You can read more of this story in the book by John and Alison Lamont, located in our church library.

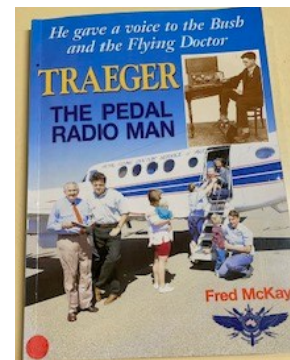


The history of Frontier Services goes back to the vision of **Reverend John Flynn** to bring practical care and spiritual support to people living in the vast isolated heart of Australia. His motto, “**a mantle of safety over the inland**” was central to the work of the Australian Inland Mission which he founded in 1912 and this motto continues to guide the work of Frontier Services today.

Several books have been written about the work of **John Flynn** and of the difficulties of life in outback Australia especially in the early 1900s. Vast distances between neighbours, extreme weather conditions, limited medical services and lack of educational opportunities for children were just some of the challenges of outback life. Thrilling stories are told of the establishment of the **pedal radio**, linking outback cattle stations and isolated medical outposts, as well as the later establishment of the **Flying Doctor Service** and the **School of the Air** for outback children.

A book in our church library called “**Traeger the Pedal Radio Man**” tells the story of **Alf Traeger** who is less well known to many people but who shared Flynn's vision and was instrumental in designing the pedal radio (and the subsequent development of the School of the Air and

the Flying Doctor Service.) The book was written by **Reverend Fred McKay** who worked extensively with Flynn, the Australian Inland Mission (later known as Frontier Services) and the Flying Doctor Service, later becoming Flynn's successor.



Frontier Services today maintains Flynn's vision to bring companionship, support and hope to people in remote communities in Australia. Much of this work is through Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers. A number of people from our congregation have been actively involved in working parties to the outback over many years.

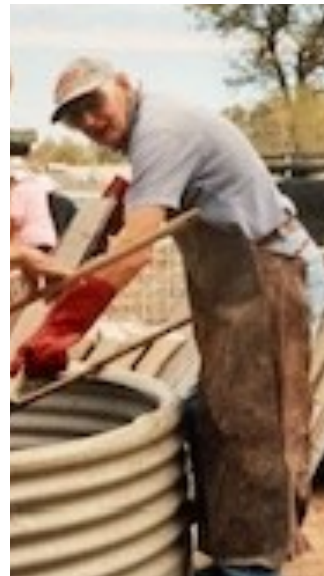


FRONTIER SERVICES WORK PARTIES

By Wal and Ruth Rowen

Our first work party was in 2001 when we were encouraged by Margaret and Bill Lees to join a work party to Coen up in Cape York.

We travelled in our caravans to renovate the old Coen hospital which had closed and was to be handed back to the community to be used as a recreation centre. It entailed a lot of hard work with cleaning, painting, adding new shower rooms etc.



Library) for more information. John spent time writing some of the book whilst we were there.

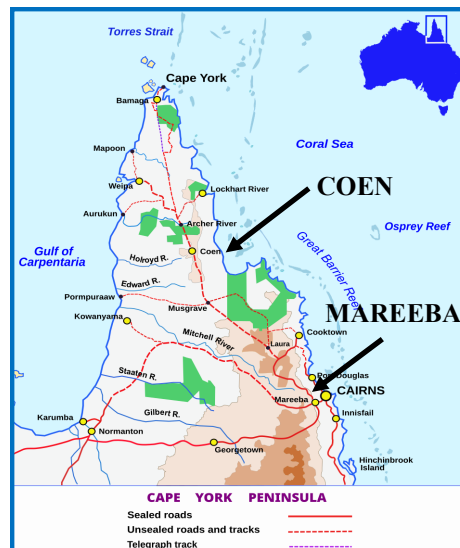
Each Sunday morning we were all off to John Flynn Memorial Church where the services always ended with the singing of "Deep Stillness," also done with the actions. That always brings back some wonderful memories and was also a great favourite of Margaret Lees who we lost a

few years back.

We all enjoyed the time together with the other 20 or so workers. It was finished in 3 weeks and finally given back by the President of the UCA at the time, Reverend John Mavor. We had lots of laughs and also some tears when it was time to leave.

Then it was off to Mareeba, west of Cairns, for another 2 weeks where we were joined by Don and Eleanor McLean to work on the Remote Area Families Services House.

Over the years since then we have worked at St Philip's College in Alice Springs eight times and our friendships with friends, including staff continue to this day. We still



In 2014 we went to Lake Tyers Caravan Park which was owned by the Uniting Church. It was to be painted and new curtains made for the cabins. A very special treat for us was that we were to be joined by two "chefs" who looked after us for the first week - Jill Dunn and Ruth Rattray-Wood!!!

Over the years we have many, many happy memories and our regret is that we are now unable to continue because of that awful thing called "old age."

have a reunion each November where some of the staff fly down to join us. Refer to Reverend John Lamont's book, "The Right Amount of Crazy" (in the Church

FRONTIER SERVICES WORK PARTIES - Continued.



“Wagons Ho!” On the way up the Cape

COEN



Scrubbing the roof



Lots more to do.



A bit of fun after the hard work

Task accomplished, Coen, Cape York



MAREEBA



Relaxing around the campfire



Eleanor and Don McLean, Margaret and Bill Lees
Ruth and Wal Rowen

FRONTIER SERVICES WORK PARTIES - Continued.



Wal working on the “Acid Bath” to clean off the dirt from the air conditioning louvres of St Philips College, Alice Springs.

ALICE SPRINGS St Philips College



Making new curtains for the Auditorium Stage, St Philips College

CONGRATULATIONS to the DAYS for GIRLS TEAM

Recently Days for Girls celebrated the completion of **10,000** hygiene kits for girls since they began as a small group in Mt Martha Uniting Church. The group have now grown considerably in numbers and meet at Koorootang Court where they are continuing to attract more willing helpers. This year alone they have made 1500 kits, most of which have been sent overseas and a small number distributed within Australia.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Days for Girls Team.

Your efforts have touched the lives of over 10,000 girls.



Anyone who would like to assist in 2026 would be most welcome. There are tasks for all - ranging from folding, cutting, sewing, packing, threading ...

We meet on the first Friday of each month between 10am and 3pm but you are welcome for whatever time you can come.

For further information see Hazel Ewing.

Celebrating 10,000 kits - The Coordinator, Ruth Dickinson, cutting the cake.



WELCOME TO BOB AND ROSALIE & BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO VAL

Reverend Doctor Bob Faser and Rosalie Faser arrived at Mt Martha on Friday 26th September, 2025. This holiday visit was arranged by them for two reasons.

1. Bob Faser was taking the worship service on both the 28th September and the 5th October 2025 whilst Reverend Peter Wiltshire took some leave.
2. Their visit was also going to coincide with the 90th birthday celebrations for Val Beckett on the 28th September at the conclusion of the worship service.

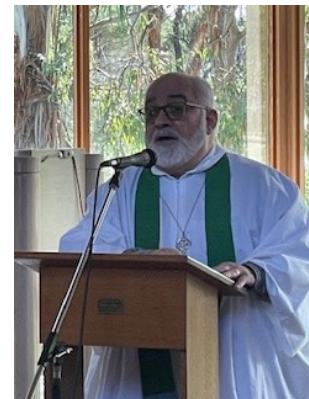
There was a very good church at-

tendance on the 29th September to hear Bob's sermon and to also honour Val Beckett, a much loved and respected Christian lady. The congregation were happy to stay and enjoy the fellowship, that followed the light lunch provided.

Bob and Rosalie visited other members of the congregation during their stay on the Peninsula.

A sad note, to conclude: Rosalie's brother Trevor died on Tuesday night, 22nd November 2025, after suffering a recent stroke. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family during this difficult time.

Rev Dr Bob Faser is taking the funeral service on Tuesday 2nd December at Phillip Stephens at Rosny, Tasmania.



Contributed by Margaret Barker



Cake cutting and singing "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" to a dear friend.



Margaret presented a moving Tribute to Val, recalling wonderful times and many years of friendship and service as a devoted member of Mt Martha Uniting Church.

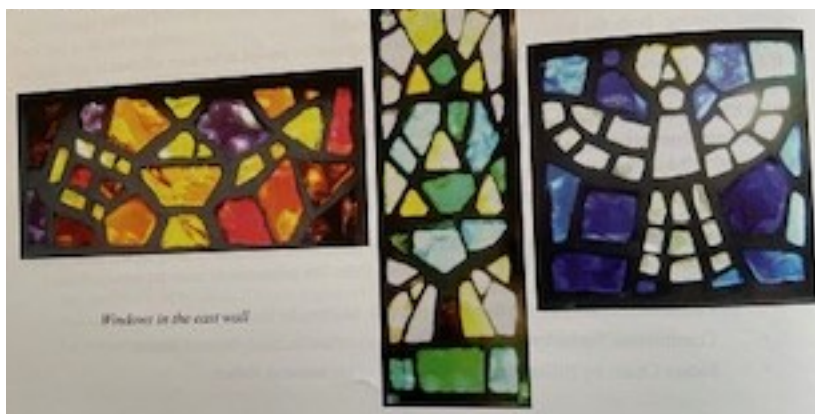
STOP PRESS: Word has it that there have been other special birthdays this year, including our friend Rob Marks who is celebrating his birthday as KIT goes to print. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CONGRATULATIONS and BEST WISHES** to all who have celebrated special milestones in recent months.

HISTORY CONTINUES ... Mt Martha UC Stained Glass Windows

DID YOU KNOW?

The stained glass windows are a feature of Mt Martha church. They were created by John Ferguson, an artist and expert worker in glass. Working with the architect, he designed the magnificent windows in the north, east and south walls, bringing light and colour into the church.

The three windows in the **east wall** were donated by Gwen Woodfull in memory of her husband William (Bill) who was famous as an international cricketer. He was greatly admired for his sportsmanship, his leadership as a great and successful Test Cricket Captain, his absolute integrity, courage and skill. He was also an educational administrator and a churchman. The three windows represent the “Burning Bush” (Exodus 3:2), “The Lamp of Learning” and the “Baptism of Jesus” (‘Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and alighting on him.’ Matthew 3:16)



The three windows in the **north wall** were placed to honour and perpetuate the memory of Harry Mackay. Harry had been a Patrol Padre for the Methodist Inland Mission; President of the Methodist Church, Victoria and Tasmania Conference; Director of the Federal Inland Mission; and the first Chairman of the Mount Martha Uniting Church congregation. Two windows depicting the fish, the beach and the sky represent the time that Harry spent at Mt Martha during his retirement. The twin gums in the third window represent the time Harry spent as a Patrol Padre for the Methodist Inland Mission in the Alice Springs area.



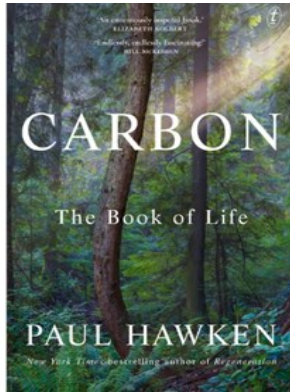
The twin gums in the third window represent the time Harry spent as a



The window in the south wall depicts an anchor because the church is by the sea.

CARBON, The Book of Life ...

Contributed by Josie Q.



I read a good book recently called 'Carbon: The Book of Life', by Paul Hawken. It really opened my eyes. He talks about the connectedness of Nature, and how humans need to think again about their motives ... and negative impacts on natural systems. It's quite beautifully written in parts, some say poetic.

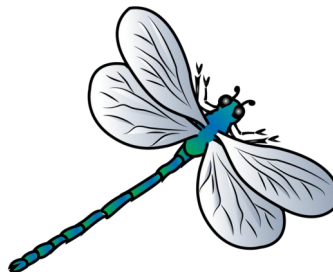
Here are a few quotes from the book about - Soil, Being a Tree ...or a Dragonfly, and (perhaps) The existence of God?

'When you are standing on the ground, you are standing on the roof of another world.'

'Soil is the dance and flow of carbon under the surface of the earth. There is a soundtrack for the dance. ... scientists have inserted micro

phones into the soil and turned up the volume. There are thrums, chirrs, chirps, trill and rasps. There are rustles like the soft muffled sound of dry leaves and water moving through pores.'

'It is hard to underestimate the drama of being a tree, or any plant. Every [plant] is an unimaginable feat of luck and ingenuity.'



'When a dragonfly hunts, it hovers perfectly still and positions itself between its prey and a shadow cast behind it by, say, a tree, to conceal its position.'

'The chances of the universe creating the resonance and alignments conducive to the orchestra of life are calculated by physicists to be virtually incalculable. And yet, here we are...'



Job 12:7-10

'But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.'

Colossians 1:16 -17

'For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.'

Sharing with Each Other

LEARNING TO JUST “BE” - by Bronnie Taylor

“Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth!” Psalm 96:1

I am very inspired by the artist Margaret Preston. She travelled widely and believed in the significance of Aboriginal and also Modernist art. She drew, painted and made printed works of landscapes, native flora and still life settings. Margaret Preston died in Mosman in 1963.

I really love the graphic design of her art works and I am beginning to do activities to celebrate the gifts of nature and also, that are for ‘me,’ to immerse myself in joy, stillness and peace.

Sometimes giving ourselves an opportunity and this space (literal and figurative), is very difficult as we see ourselves as daughters, wives and mothers to those around us. I wanted to share this drawing and encourage others to be creative and also to just “BE”.



Have you read **A Secret No More?**

By
John J Hennekam

John has recently had his book “A Secret No More” published and is currently working on his next novel.

He says that he has wanted to “write” for much of his life but has not had the opportunity. However, in recent years this yearning has come to fruition as he pursues his long held dream.

Congratulations John. We look forward to reading your books now and into the future.

DO YOU HAVE A SKILL OR A HOBBY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS?

Perhaps you write poetry or short stories. Perhaps you create patchwork, knit children’s toys, make rugs for the homeless ...

Do you construct wooden toys, build train tracks, make wooden bowls or work on a community project through a Men’s Shed

Perhaps you no longer have opportunity to pursue your hobby but enjoy seeing other people’s creations. Thank you Bronnie and John for sharing your special interests. May this inspire us to consider what skills we could share in future issues of KIT.

CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

The Christmas Story - As told by the Animals

THE OX AND THE ASS AT THE MANGER, by Jules Supervielle

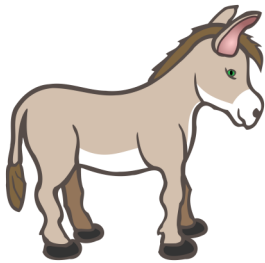
Contributed by Beverley W.

Jesus our brother, kind and good,
Was humbly born in a stable rude,
And the friendly beasts around Him stood,
Jesus our brother, kind and good.

I said the dove from rafters high
Cooed Him to sleep so He would
not cry
We cooed Him to sleep, my mate
and I.



I, said the donkey, shaggy and brown,



I carried His mother up hill and
down,
I carried her safely to Bethlehem
Town,
I, said the donkey, shaggy and
brown.

I said the dove from rafters high.

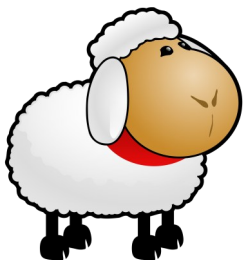
And every beast by some good spell,
In the stable dark was glad to tell
Of the gift that he gave to Emmanuel,
The gift he gave Emmanuel.

I, said the cow all white and red,
I gave Him my manger for His bed,
I gave Him my hay to pillow His
head,



I, said the cow all white and red.

And ... 'I' was glad to tell
Of the gift I gave Emmanuel
The gift I gave Emmanuel
Jesus our brother, kind and good.



I, said the sheep with curly horn,
I gave him my wool for His blan-
ket warm,
He wore my coat on Christmas
morn,
I said the sheep with curly horn.



CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

Continued ...

Excerpts from: **A Christmas Carol** by Christina Rossetti (Contributed by Beverley W.)

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
nor earth contain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away
when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ

What can I give Him,
poor as I am?
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring Him a lamb.
If I were a Wise Man,
I would do my part.
Yet what can I give Him?
I'll give Him my heart.



THE GIFTS of the MAGI

A Shortened Version of American novelist O. Henry's story - Contributed by John H.

Linda and Jim are a young, newly married couple who are living in very poor circumstances. They each want to give the very best present to one another, but they have not got enough money to do so.

A week before Christmas, Linda decides to have her golden, and much admired hair cut very short and sells her locks for \$20. This now enables her to buy a gold chain for Jim's gold pocket watch.



Linda is very happy and looks forward to seeing Jim's eyes light up when he sees the chain.

Jim, meanwhile, has decided to buy two golden combs for Linda's beautiful hair and he sells his gold

watch in order to pay for the combs.

When Jim comes home that night and sees Linda's hair cut so very short, he shares his now unneeded gift with her. Linda then gives Jim his gold chain to match his gold watch.

The tears they shed together are tears of joy. They reflect the immense love they have for each other.

The moral of the story is: 'It is the thought that counts and the love with which the gift is given' (even if it is a gift for which you have no use).



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

from John H.

Loving God, we pray that at Christmas our hearts may be filled with:

The **wonder** of Mary,
The **obedience** of Joseph,
The **joy** of the Angels,
The **eagerness** of the Shepherds,
The **determination** of the Magi
And
The **peace** of the Christ Child.

God of **JOY** at Christmas,
Hear our prayers.



The Story of SAINT NICHOLAS by John H.

In the 4th century there lived a bishop in Myra, Greece, who is still remembered for his wonderful generosity to children. Bishop Nicholas lived at a time when there was much poverty and hardship among his flock. Nicholas would ride out on his horse at night to leave small parcels of food and money at the homes where he knew children were suffering. He is also believed to have intervened in disputes by paying debts for others and bringing faith and freedom to the oppressed.

After his death, the early Christians prayed to St Nicholas to intercede for them to receive God's favour during difficult times. The fame of St Nicholas spread throughout Europe and December 6, the anniversary of St Nicholas'

death, evolved as the Night for Children rather than Christmas. That allowed Christmas, a few weeks later, to be dedicated to more devotional Christian practices.

As a young boy in Holland, I well remember Sinter Klaas, as he became known amongst children. He rode on a white horse and visited homes leaving presents for children, just like the character we have these days. You will notice the similarity of the names. Santa Claus is an Americanisation of Sinter Klaas (for commercial purposes).

It has been a long journey from the Fourth Century Bishop of Myra, St Nicholas, who showed his devotion to God in extraordinary kindness and generosity to those in need, to America's jolly Santa Claus, whose largesse often supplies luxuries to the affluent.

However, if you peel back the modern images, he is still Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, whose caring surprises continue to model true giving and faithful stewardship to God.

To counter the growing commercialisation of Christmas, my late

sister campaigned to keep Christ in Christmas and staunchly rejected the commercially convenient "Xmas".



I appeal to you to do likewise. This year select your Christmas greeting cards with warm Christian messages and help stamp out "Xmas".

PRAYER:

Loving God, teach us to be like St Nicholas and show our love for you by being more considerate of others, especially those in need. May our concerns for vulnerable children be strengthened by the holy events of that first Christmas night. Amen



A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Shared at Advent Worship Service by Janet H.

On this first Sunday in Advent, let us pray.

In our world, where it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the darkness of natural disasters, conflict, fear, inequality, political unrest, racism, injustice, the daily challenges of life, ageing, illness, family conflict and grief... we look for signs of **hope**, as any darkness is not going to define who we are. We know that **this hope comes from you Lord.**



At that first Christmas, not in the way anyone expected, not with force of fanfare, but in the fragile form of a newborn baby, God Incarnate was born into poverty, under the shadow of injustice. This incredible **love** would go on to challenge injustice, lift the weary, and turn the world upside down—with **grace, mercy and kindness.**

Today as we enter the advent period we pray for the **hope** God offers—a hope that doesn't just comfort us, but that wakes us up, stirs us to action and moves us to live differently, a hope that **heals and transforms**, to bring **light and joy.**

God we know that **you are with us** in every moment of every day and that **nothing in all the world can separate us from your love** through Jesus. We pray that you will open our hearts and minds so we can live in your presence.

In the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples, "**Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name ...**"

CHRISTMAS IS COMING ...

With challenges of loneliness - Helen L.

Christmas is coming, and there are so many lonely people.

Servicemen lonely for home.

People in war torn, countries, lonely for peace.

Refugees, prisoners, the starving,
And outsiders, lonely for food and love.

We are lonely, Lord,

Lonely for the loved one whose chair at the table is empty this Christmas

Lonely for the children who have grown up and gone away

Lonely for parents who understand us
Lonely for the childhood memories of a Christmas which is no more
And for a peaceful world, which has not come.

You know what it is to be lonely Lord
There in the manger, no room at the inn
There on the road, no place to lay your head
There on the cross, no one to save you.
Oh, let us lonely ones find one another again.

**HELP US LORD TO CARE FOR OTHERS
THIS CHRISTMAS**

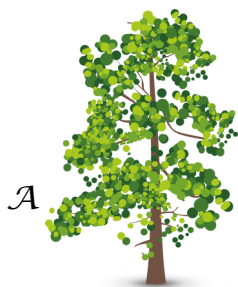
ARE WE LISTENING?

Shared by Maree Walker

When Rev Peter included the importance of “listening” in his sermon on Sunday 30th November, I remembered my yoga teacher sharing this special writing which I found profound.



*When you listen to me, you affirm me,
But your listening must be real:
Sensitive and serious, not looking busily around,
Not with a worried or distracted frown,
Not preparing what you will say next,
But giving me your full attention and time.
I have ideas to share,
Feelings which too often I keep to myself,
deep questions which struggle inside me for answers.
I have hopes, which are not easy to share.
I have pain and fear and guilt I try to stifle.
These are sensitive areas and a real part of me,
But it takes courage to share them.
Please show interest with your eyes or an occasional word,
Attuned to pick up not only the spoke words,
But also the glimmer of a smile,
look of pain, the hesitation, the struggle,
Which may suggest something as yet too deep for words.
Listen! All I asked was that you listen, not talk or
do.
Advice is cheap and I am determined to find out for myself.
I am not helpless, maybe discouraged and faltering,
but not helpless—trust me.*



A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

At Christmas time, as we hear again the Christmas story, we often feel overcome with awe and wonder at the incredible **LOVE** embodied in the baby in the manger.



This baby - Jesus, the son of God - was to grow up, bringing to the world the amazing good news of **GOD'S LOVE** for all his people. This love however was a costly

love involving death on the cross, but resulting in the glorious resurrection which brought to the world **FAITH, HOPE** and the assurance of **LOVE** triumphing over evil.

This is the message in Corinthians Chapter 13, the familiar verses on love, concluding in verse 13, " ... these three remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is **LOVE**."

At Christmas, as we reflect on God's amazing gift of **LOVE** and our response to God's **LOVE** the Corinthians verses come to mind. The following re-writing of these verses by Sharon Jaynes was recorded on her internet site. She wrote them for her family and although not necessarily directly relevant to all family situations, the message conveyed can be adapted to life in general.

Sharon Jaynes: (<http://girlfriendsingod.com/seeking-god>) Copyright

"With Christmas, it is easy to get so busy with the cooking, decorating and shopping that we forget why we are doing all this in the first place. Sometimes, the very people we love get lost in the hustle and bustle of packed schedules, holiday parties and Christmas musicals.

Several years ago I wrote a Christmas version of 1 Corinthians: 13 to help me keep my focus on what Paul deemed most important of all ... love. As part of our family tradition, I pull it out and post it somewhere in our home as a reminder of what's really important during the holiday season."

"If I decorate my house perfectly with lovely plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights, and shiny glass balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals, and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home, and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

ing.

If I trim the Christmas tree with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties, and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of your way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

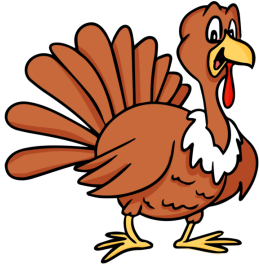
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust. But giving the gift of love will endure."



SOME CHRISTMAS FUN
The 12 Days of
CHRISTMAS / TURKEY TROUBLE

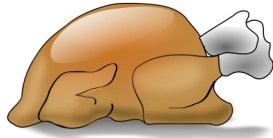


On the first day of Christmas
my true love said to me
I'm glad we've bought a tur-
key and a proper Christmas
tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could
be heard,
As we tucked into our turkey - a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas we had friends in from
next door.
The turkey tasted just as good as on the day before.

On the fourth day of Christmas, Gran came, she's ra-
ther old.
We finished up the Christmas
pud. and ate the turkey cold.



On the fifth day of Christmas
outside the snowflakes flurried.
But we were nice and warm inside - we ate the turkey
curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas the turkey spirit died.
The children fought and bickered and we ate the tur-
key fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave a
wince.
When we all sat down to dinner and were given tur-
key mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas the dog ran off for
shelter.
I served up turkey pancakes and a glass of Alka Selt-
zer.

On the ninth day of Christmas poor Dad began to cry.
He said he couldn't stand the strain of eating turkey
pie.

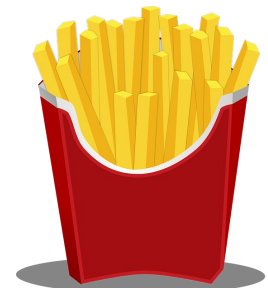
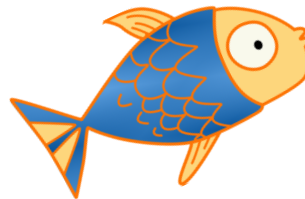
On the tenth day of Christmas the air was rather blue.
And everybody grumbled at eating turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas the Christmas tree
was moulting.
Mince pies as hard as rock and the turkey quite re-
volting.

On the twelfth day of Christmas at last Dad smacked
his lips.

The guests had gone, the turkey too - we dined on
fish and chips.

Author unknown.



Contributed by Helen Luxton

Sharing with Each Other Favourite Recipes

A Message from Jill Dunn.

Greetings to All.

Sometimes when we are on duty in the kitchen, a helper will bring a recipe which is instantly popular and inevitably, someone will ask for the recipe. Here are two which are constantly requested. Enjoy!



EASY FRUIT MUFFINS (Jill Dunn)

2 cups S.R. flour
4 tablespoons sugar*
1 teaspoon mixed spice.

Mix all this together, then add:

1 egg
1 cup milk
1/2 cup of melted butter

Mix well, then add:

1 cup fruit of your choice.

Spoon into muffin pans and cook in a moderate oven for 15 - 20 minutes.

OR ...

Spoon into mini-muffin pans and cook for 10 - 15 minutes.

The fruit choices are only limited by your imagination. Basic is grated apple, but it can be: mashed banana, chopped up pear, stewed and drained apple with stewed rhubarb, berries (blueberries are especially delicious).

If using stewed or canned fruit, make sure they are drained well.

*Regarding sugar...if using naturally sweet fruit...reduce sugar to 3 tablespoons. Enjoy!

HAZELNUT SLICE (Meg Hall)

1 packet Marie biscuits (crushed)
4 oz (125g) butter
1/2 tin condensed milk
60g flaked almonds
2 tablespoons golden syrup.

In top of double boiler gently melt butter and syrup. Then stir in crushed biscuits and flaked almonds.



Press this firmly into a greased slice tin, and allow to set in refrigerator.

TOPPING:

1 large block of Hazelnut chocolate, chopped and melted gently with 60g Copha in top of double boiler.

Spread this on top of chilled base. Allow to cool and set.



Looking forward to others sharing their yummy recipes.

RECIPES: A Treat From Chris

Chris Johnson recently shared this cake with us for morning tea during her time at Mt Martha UC in November 2025. In response to the many requests for her recipe, she kindly contributed the recipe to our KIT magazine for distribution to the congregation.

Thank you Chris. We always look forward to having you and Robert worshipping with us.

INGREDIENTS:

½ cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts	*You need more than 1 packet cake mix, (Greens mix is good)
550gms plain vanilla or butter cake mix * (*2 pkts of cake mix are required, weighing out to 550 gm)	
1 packet vanilla instant pudding mix	<u>Cinnamon filling:</u>
¾ cup vegetable oil - <i>canola, sunflower</i> etc	1/3 cup packed light brown sugar 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
¾ cup water	<u>Glaze:</u>
4 large eggs	1 cup sifted icing sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	

METHOD:

Preheat oven 175°.

Prepare Bundt tin. ** *Lightly* mist bundt tin (or large ring tin?) with (vegetable) oil, then dust lightly with flour

Prepare filling – Mix & set aside.

Sprinkle the chopped pecans / walnuts evenly over the bottom of the pan– Set aside.

In large bowl blend cake mix, oil, water, eggs, vanilla on *low* speed for 1 min.

Stop machine, scrape down sides. Beat 2 minutes on *medium* speed until thick & smooth.

Pour one-third of batter into prepared pan

Scatter half of the filling evenly on batter.

Pour one-third of batter evenly over the filling.

Scatter remaining filling over batter

Pour remaining batter over filling and smooth surface.

BAKE in the oven until golden brown and springs back (55-60 mins).

Remove pan from oven. Place on wire rack to cool (20 mins). Then run a knife around the edge of cake and invert onto the rack. Cool completely.

While cooling, prepare the glaze by blending until smooth. Place cake on serving plate / platter and drizzle the glaze around the top of the cake. Cake is best served warm. Can reheat gently in microwave.

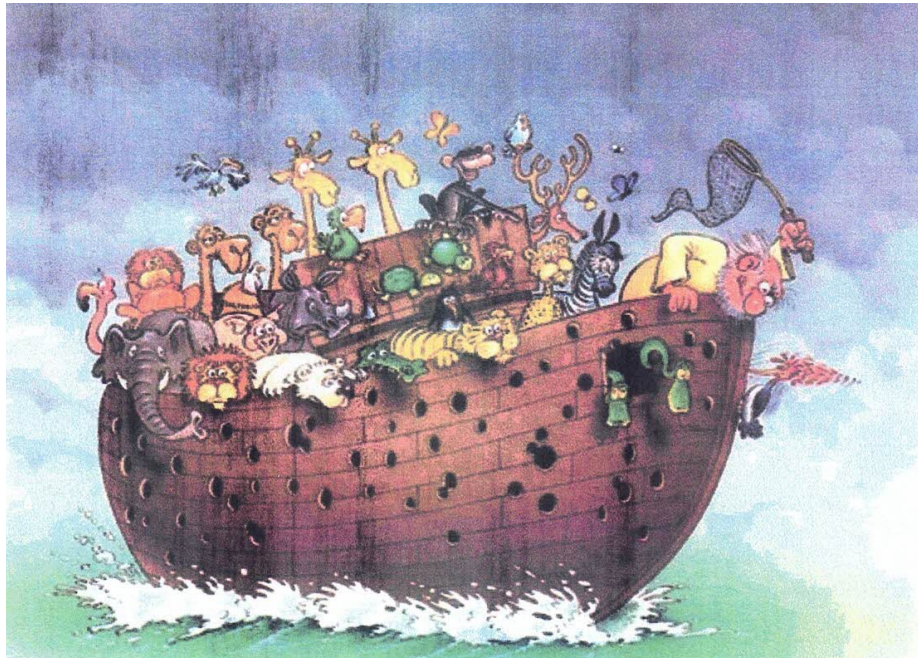
Sharing with Each Other

Time to SMILE ...



THE WOOD PECKER MIGHT HAVE TO GO!

From George and Gwen Sayer



Everything I need to know about life, learned fom Noah's Ark ...

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics: just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float awhile.
10. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

Pass it along and make someone else smile too.

Sharing with Each Other



SOME CHRISTMAS BONBON JOKES



What did one cranberry say to the other cranberry?
"Tis the season to be jelly!"

Why did the Christmas tree visit the hospital?
Because it was feeling green.

What did one Christmas tree say to another?
Lighten up!

What happened to the boy who kept eating Christmas decorations?
He got Tinsel-itis.

What do monkeys sing at Christmas?
Jungle bells!

What happens when Christmas trees go numb?
They get pines and needles.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Christmas is coming,
It's such a special time for the children.
Wide eyed wonders and whispered secrets,
Wreaths on the door,
Nativity scenes,
Carols in the air.
Let us all be like children again.
A message from Helen L.

Why did the Christmas tree apply for a new job?
It wanted to branch out.

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Yule.
Yule who?
Yule never guess!

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Pudding.
Pudding who?
Pudding up the Christmas tree!

What happens when Santa gets stuck in a chimney?
He gets Claustrophobia.

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS TO ALL

Some meaningful quotes from Beverley W ...

"At the heart of Christmas is a message of hope. The God who renewed history at Bethlehem, offers today a new beginning in our personal lives, in Australian society and in the world. This is the central meaning of Christmas."

"May you have the gladness of Christmas
which is hope,
The spirit of Christmas
which is peace,
The heart of Christmas
which is love"



HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE