

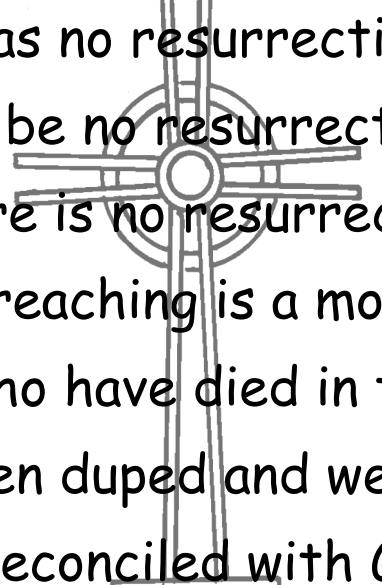


*Nurturing our people in the Christian faith and reaching out to the local community in the power of the Holy Spirit.*



No. 245  
February 2016

## **EASTER DAY 27<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2016**



If there was no resurrection of Jesus  
there can be no resurrection for us,  
and if there is no resurrection for us  
our preaching is a mockery,  
those who have died in the faith  
have been duped and we are still  
unreconciled with God.

**But CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED!**

*(from William Neil's "One Volume Bible Commentary" p.461.)*

## A Time and a Season

There's an old saying that you never know how tired you are until you stop working. I experienced the truth of that adage at the end of 2015, and in the first week or so after the New Year. Suddenly, it seemed like lethargy and an inability to stay awake were the defining characteristics of my life. All the stress and tension that had been deferred in the lead up to Christmas, and which had accumulated over the course of the year, seemed to sneak up behind me and whack me over the back of the head – with predictable results.

Of course, some people deal with fatigue by *never* taking a break; they think that if they just keep moving, they'll never collapse. These are the people whose holidays and "time off" tend to be characterised by a frenzied round of activity. But this attitude is folly; for while it might succeed in the short term, over the longer course it will only result in a more debilitating collapse from an overload of stress, fatigue, and relentless activity.

Christian tradition has long understood the necessity for "time off", for "fallow time" to recharge the batteries and allow ourselves to de-stress. These days, "de-stressing packages" and health cures are all the fashion; but they are, at best, a temporary fix to a more fundamental problem: the problem of living a life without pattern, without a rhythm that takes account of our whole humanity.

Jesus understood the necessity for "down time". The Gospels make repeated references to Jesus going off into the wilderness to spend time in prayer and reflection, to recharge, not just his spiritual batteries, but the whole of his personhood. Likewise, Jesus' attitude to the Sabbath is instructive: the Sabbath was made for humanity, and not the other way around.

In other words, the Sabbath existed to serve our human need for refreshment, rather than it being a period of imposed idleness arising from literalist interpretation of Scripture.

Later, in the medieval period, the monastic tradition likewise embraced the need for patterned existence, breaking the day into periods of work, study, rest, eating, and worship. Unlike today, when work has become the totality of our day and a measure of our "usefulness" as individuals, the monastic tradition understood that work is only one element in a human totality that requires, among other things, periods to simply relax and be at ease. Those cultures which still observe a time of "siesta" likewise understand the need for patterned existence.

Which is why the Church breaks the year into seasons. Some of those seasons – like Lent and Advent – are times of intense preparation for deep immersion in the profound festivals of Easter and Christmas. Others – like Pentecost – are times for both renewal and activity. And others – like Epiphany – are times of stillness and reflection, when we recharge our batteries as individuals and as a community of faith, and dwell upon the deep mystery of the Incarnation celebrated in Christmas, and the depths of Cross and Resurrection in Easter.

So as we contemplate the year ahead, let us both pause in reflection of what has been and what lies before – but let us also pay attention to the shape of the year as expressed in its liturgical seasons, and in this shape find a pattern for our life of faith that, in turn, helps give shape to the whole of our humanity.

Brendan

## FOR REFLECTION

The following reflections are taken from *“With Love to the World”* (2/2004), written by the Rev. Bev Fabb, who used to be one of the ministers here at Mountview. They are used with permission.

*“As we begin our time of repentance in Lent it is important to remind ourselves of the good news and where better to hear it than in Romans! (see Romans 10:8-13. below). Paul says everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. There is no other requirement for salvation – no demand for adherence to particular doctrinal beliefs, for participation in a particular form of worship, for acceptance of particular understandings of Scripture, for submission to a particular ethical pattern. All that is needed for salvation is to confess Jesus as Lord and to believe that God raised him from death to life. This is probably an ancient baptismal formula.*

*Converts were asked to proclaim Jesus as Lord, the title which recognizes Jesus as the divine one to whom they now gave allegiance. By saying ‘Jesus is Lord’ they were also implying who was NOT Lord - not the emperor, not the gods of fertility, wealth, national pride, etc. worshipped by pagan peoples around them. Through their belief in Jesus’ death and resurrection, they acknowledged the power of God to transform human existence, to bring new life out of death. Such a confession of faith united believers of different races and culture. It unites us, too, with believers everywhere.”*

*“The word ‘repentance’ means literally, ‘changing direction.’ While the psalmist (see Psalm 51 below) is very aware of how sin permeates his whole being, he is equally convinced of the mercy and unfailing love of God. Repentance involves turning towards the God of love. Jesus called people to ‘repent and believe the good news’ that in God we find love, mercy and renewal of life. Lent provides time to assess whether we are still on track in our discipleship, still following Jesus on the way. And if we have wandered away, it offers us the opportunity to change direction and re-discover the God of mercy and love waiting to welcome us back home with gladness and celebration.”*

### ROMANS 10: 8b – 13

“The word is near you,  
on your lips, and in your heart.”  
(that is, the word of faith that we  
proclaim); because if you confess  
with your lips that Jesus is Lord and  
believe in your heart that God raised  
him from the dead, you will be saved.

For one believes with the heart and  
so is justified, and one confesses  
with the mouth and so is saved. The  
scripture says, “No one who believes  
in him will be put to shame.” For  
there is no distinction between Jew  
and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of  
all who call on him.

For, “Everyone who calls on the name  
of the Lord shall be saved.”

NRSV

### PSALM 51: 1- 4

Have mercy on me, O God, according  
to your steadfast love: according to  
your abundant mercy blot out my  
transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniqui-  
ty, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions and my  
sin is ever before me.

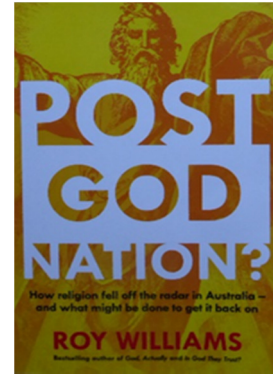
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight, so  
that you are satisfied in your sen-  
tence and blameless when you pass  
judgement.

NRSV

**“POST GOD NATION”** by Roy Williams.

The following excerpt is copied from the above book (page 290) which was mentioned in the Library Notes in the August, 2015, issue of “Contact”, but it has only just reached the Mountview Library.

The blurb about the book says **“How Religion fell off the radar in Australia – and what might be done to get it back on.”**



We quote this paragraph, headed: “Evangelism”.

.....  
: *What of evangelising to adults – inside church and outside? How should the Churches go*  
: *about it? Of two general principles I am utterly convinced.*  
: *The first is that there is no future for Christianity – or any other theistic religion – in offering*  
: *up a wishy-washy form of humanism. Christianity teaches many wise truths about the world*  
: *– not least about the primacy of love, the reality of evil, and the potentially beneficial by-*  
: *products of suffering. But ultimately it stands or falls on its basal **supernatural** claims.*  
: *Attempts by ultra-liberal theologians to win over unbelievers by downplaying or sidelining*  
: *those claims – such as those made by the Englishman John A. T. Robinson in the 1960s, or the*  
: *American Episcopalian bishop John Shelby Spong in the 1980s and 1990s – have got no-*  
: *where. Even books such as Francis Spufford’s “Unapologetic”, while well-meaning and full of*  
: *useful insights, are most unlikely to make a dent in secularism and ignorance. The challenge*  
: *is to convince people that the startling, the amazing, the apparently ‘foolish’ (St. Paul’s word*  
: *in 1 Corinthians 1:18) really is true. It is only that realisation that is life-changing.*  
.....

“Post God Nation.” P 290

## THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

**W**hen the song of angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations  
to bring peace among the brothers,  
to make music in the heart.

*Howard Thurman. in “Seasons of the Spirit.”*

## PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Because the world is beautiful  
and beauty is a tender thing  
and we are keepers of creation  
*we need you God*

Because human knowledge seems endless  
and we do not know what we do not know  
*we need you God*

Because we can live without you  
and are free to go against you  
and could worship our wisdom alone  
*we need you God*

Because you came among us  
and sat beside us  
and heard us speak and saw us ignore you  
and loved us to the end  
and triumphed over all our hatred

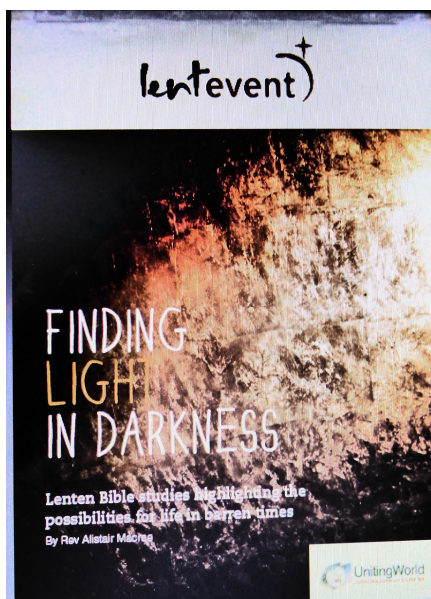
*We acknowledge our need  
And we offer you our worship*

*Amen.*

*(From "Be Our Freedom Lord," Terry Falla 1994)  
(Reprinted from the Lenten Study, "Finding Light in Darkness" by Alister Macrae.)*

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## LENTEN STUDIES



**“FINDING LIGHT IN DARKNESS”** is the title of the study book being used for our 2016 Lenten Studies. Promotion for enrolments in a study group is well under way. Sunday morning and Wednesday morning are the two popular ones. Others may be established if sufficient people indicate a preference.

Should no group be convenient for you, ask for a study book so that you may still participate in this learning event running through this Season of Lent.

See Rev. Brendan or Margaret Williams to either join in a group or to receive a copy of the study book.

On this page and elsewhere are quotations from this study.

## **NEWS FROM UNITING WORLD**

**You may not know that the Uniting Church in Australia has established relationships with 35 churches in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Uniting World has responsibility for representing the Uniting Church to each of these churches as we partner with them in transforming local communities.**

### **Faith flourishing at the grassroots**

Limits on exercising ministry have often helped the Church rediscover its natural strength of grassroots connecting. In countries where religion is officially restricted or where Christianity is a distrusted minority faith, the Uniting Church's overseas partner churches often work relationally through people and communities rather than by trying to establish unwelcome public institutions.

In **Sri Lanka**, for example, the Government limits what is said publicly about the civil war, in which over two hundred thousand people died over a period of three months in 2009 alone. In this context the Methodist Church carefully offers safe hospitality for people bearing the trauma of war. One of these homes supported by the Uniting Church is for women who have experienced abuse and violence. The home provides a safe space for women to recover from trauma and explore vocational opportunities.

In **China**, religion was suppressed during the Cultural Revolution that ended in 1976. During that time, local elders regularly and quietly visited families, praying, reading the Bible and supporting them away from the official gaze. This underground connecting provided the means and spiritual impulse for a burgeoning Church when the Cultural Revolution ended.

Today, the growth of the Church in China has been explosive with congregations of more than 5000 people overflowing to the street. Adult baptisms of 100 to 150 people at a time are commonplace. Moreover, the Church has found a place within society, recognised by Government and in some cases provided with funding to help extend care to orphaned children and the elderly and provide schooling for migrant children. The Amity Foundation, established by the Church, is the biggest NGO in China and provides much needed social services to the poor and marginalised.

In **Fiji**, police monitor and attend the meetings of the national Conference and Standing Committee to ensure the Church does not discuss certain public matters. While not accepting such limitations, the Church is working to strengthen the person to person and community to community connecting that is fundamental to the people of Jesus.

Such limitations are not God-given but can represent an invitation for the Church to rediscover trust in the grassroots movement of Jesus Christ. Uniting World is developing a relationship with the China Christian Council that will see exciting opportunities for both to share knowledge and people so we can learn from each other.

*(The above is taken from this year's Lenten Study, "Finding Light in Darkness", by the Rev. Alister Macrae. See page 5.)*



Implicit in the Lenten Study booklet is a realisation gradually forming across the UCA that a rediscovery of our grassroots will lead us into a phase of regrowth of our strengths and with that a reversal in the trend towards diminishing numbers. Ed.

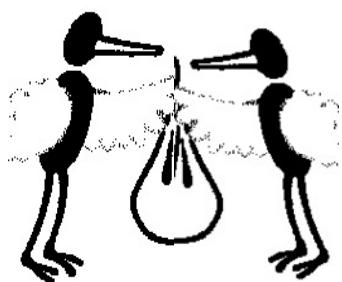


## PEOPLE AND HAPPENINGS

**Knee Replacements:** Before Christmas, **Lorraine Grant** had her second replacement. **Pat Duguid** has followed and is now in recuperation. We hope that their troubles and pain have now receded.

If you see **Jean Russell-Jones** in the foyer after morning coffee on a Sunday, say, "Hello," to her. Jean hails from Adelaide and is a temporary resident in Mitcham. May her time with us be a fruitful one.

**Congratulations!** To their four great grand daughters, Margaret and John now



have a great grandson, Caleb John, born to Rohan and Emily Pither on New Year's Day, in fact the first infant born in Victoria for 2016. A double stork image is required as this babe checked in on the scales at 11 pounds 2 ounces, a heavy load for one trad bird! The med team gave Emily a good chance in doing the job alone, but finally decided that a 'Caesar' would be kindest for both mother and infant. Both are doing well.

We have seen only intermittently **Kirsten Boxall**, our Librarian, **Laura** and **Ian**, recently due to illness. Kirsten has stayed afloat while each of the other family members, including husband, Marcus, have been struck down with a form of pneumonia, in Laura's case, necessitating serious time in the Children's Hospital. Despite the heavy caring load, Kirsten devised and wrote the Nativity Play presented by our young people during Advent.

### Advent Breakfast:

The beginning of the Advent Season was celebrated with breakfast in the hall for everybody. It was joyful, with plenty of time for noisy conversation intermingled with periods of worship. Without the professional expertise of Tim Menger in the kitchen supported by Simon Plumridge at the barbeque, it could not have turned out so well. As with all such occasions, many people hopped in to pre-



pare the hall with tables and seating, while others served, collected and washed dishes. On such events as this, opportunities are provided to have conversation with those who we greet regularly, but have not yet spent time to get to know.

REV BRENDAN LEADING WORSHIP AND ABOUT TO LIGHT THE FIRST OF THE ADVENT CANDLES, THE CANDLE OF HOPE.

## PEOPLE AND HAPPENINGS (cont.....)

### “Communion Preparation”

We offer our grateful thanks to **Phyl Coolledge** who for many years (we think about 35) has faithfully prepared the table for our Communion Services. Phyl has asked to be relieved of the duties of buying the elements, laying the table cloth, preparing the elements and clearing up after each sitting. (She didn't mention carefully washing the beautiful hand embroidered white table cloth.) We welcome that **Judy Ralston**, **Joyce Williams** and **Aileen Youngs** have volunteered to rotate the duties.



FAITHFUL SERVANT, PHYL.

Just as **Joyce Williams** offered to serve in preparing for Communion Services, she fell in her back yard, breaking an elbow, placing her in care for some weeks. She appreciates the concern of her new friends at Mountview and asked *CONTACT* to pass on her thanks for the prayer and support.

Our oldest member, **Jess Brown**, a resident in Strathdon, also has had a fall, cutting her scalp rather badly. She is doing fine, and sends a greeting along with her appreciation of our concerns and support of her. When we called, Jess reminded *CONTACT* that in return she prays daily for the Mountview community.

Our minister, **Rev Brendan** with wife **Rev Sandy** and daughter **Sophia** have been enjoying a couple of weeks in the south of the South Island of New Zealand. We are hopeful that Brendan may find time to add to *CONTACT's* “Travellers’ Tales” collection.

Up at Heritage Gardens, **Lesley Hallett** is spending each day quietly dozing in her easy chair, but ready to greet those who drop in from time to time. **Kelly Ward**, in the adjoining room, is finding life difficult with her advancing years. Unless assisted, she is having problems in handling food and eating. However, as it is summer, there is good cricket to watch on her TV, and if no cricket, there may be a tense tennis match. Kelly loves her sport.

### Diamond Wedding:

Margaret and John Williams remind all readers of the open invitation to a concert by the Maroondah Singers in the church on March 20th at 3:00p.m. to celebrate their 60 years of marriage. A catered afternoon tea will follow, leaving our family and friends free to enjoy the afternoon “without doing the dishes”. Although 60 years have passed, the couple will be joyfully supported by bridesmaid, Margaret Edgington and groomsman, Hector Davis. No gifts, please - we have been adequately blessed.



**Rats:** Yes, rats! Some of these nasty blighters have been detected of late. One air conditioner had to have chewed electric cables replaced. Property and Finance has opened an eradication war on them. Your help is vital.

**You are asked to not leave any food scraps whatsoever around the property.**



## THE SMALLER BEATITUDES

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves.....  
.....they will have no end of fun!

Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a mole hill....  
.....they will be saved a lot of bother.

Blessed are those who know how to relax without looking for excuses....  
....they are on the way to becoming wise.

Blessed are those who know when to be quiet and listen....  
....they will learn a lot of new things.

Blessed are those who do not take themselves seriously....  
and can face serious things calmly....  
....they will go far in life.

Happy are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown....  
....you will walk on the sunny side of the street.

Happy are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitude of others,  
even when the signs are unfavourable....  
....you may be taken for a fool, but this is the price of charity.

Blessed are those who think before acting and pray before thinking....  
....they will avoid many blunders.

Happy are you if you if you know how to hold your tongue and smile,  
Even when people interrupt and contradict you and tread on your toes,  
....the gospel has begun to creep into your heart.

### ABOVE ALL

Blessed are you who recognise the Lord in all whom you meet....  
....the light of truth shines in your life, for you have found true wisdom.

*Sisters of Charity, Fitzroy.  
UCA Mission Prayer Handbook 2001.*

## **SPECIAL SEASONAL DISTRICT SERVICES**

### **COMBINED FESTIVAL SERVICES FOR**

**The Avenue, Blackburn North/Nunawading and Mountview Congregations are**

**ASH WEDNESDAY .... 10th February evening at *The Avenue***

**HOLY THURSDAY.....24th March evening at *Nunawading***

**Note that GOOD FRIDAY and EASTER DAY services will be held at each  
local venue as normal.**

**CENTRE 81**  
A Community Care Service  
of Mitcham Uniting Church



## **CENTRE 81**

**We completed 2015 with a time of happiness and goodwill, selling Christmas Cards, Shortbreads and Decorations, (Jenny Cooper reports this below) and preparing 23 beautiful Christmas Hampers, which, when delivered, gave great joy to our needy people, from both Centre 81 and Linc.**

**Thankyou to all members of our Congregation who donated food and gifts to make this outreach possible, also to Philip Webb Real Estate, Eastern Emergency Relief Network and the Halloween Collection by our Young Adults.**

**January saw us open Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays as from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> 2016, from 10.00 a.m. until 12.30 p.m.**

**From Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February, we will be open Mondays & Tuesdays, closed Wednesdays, and open again on Thursdays & Fridays.**

**Thankyou to all our very loyal Receptionists, who give of their time to be rostered on, on a regular basis throughout the year, and to those who are willing to do an extra turn, usually at very short notice.**

**Thankyou to Jenny & Dennis Cooper for their tireless effort in co-ordinating the Christmas Card Sales each year, and to Sue Carter, for her efforts in maintaining a very tedious (at times) Roster.**

**We ask God's blessings on another year of service to Him and to our Community, in our Outreach at Centre 81.**

*Jill Kidd*, for the Centre 81 Committee.  
(Jenny Balshaw, Sue Carter, Margot Kemke & Jill Kidd.)

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### **CENTRE 81 CARD SHOP SALES**

We had a very happy and successful season for Christmas 2015. Our customer numbers rose to approximately 500 (due in part to the closure of two other shops since 2014) and many customers thanked us for continuing to provide this service. On the other hand we sold less packs of cards and consequently our profits were slightly down on 2014.

Final figures are

\$335.20 Profit from the sale of shortbreads

\$1590.50 Commission on card packs, sale of single cards and donations.

\$274.00 Sale of decorations and nativities for Horizons of Hope.

Total of cheques to the 19 participating charities was \$10,988.50.

It took 29 volunteers working in a variety of ways to achieve this result and we thank them all .

*Jenny Cooper*

Card Convener for Centre 81



## PACKING CHRISTMAS HAMPERS for CENTRE 81

They were all smiles when the photo below of the packing team was taken. Their task still lay in front of them. Around the walls were lined up 21 large carry bags each labelled with a family name and the makeup of the family. In this way, only items which fitted a family's needs were packed. Two lines of tables were sagging under the array of goods donated for this annual major outreach program of Centre 81.



THESE LOADED TABLES WERE EMPTY AFTER THREE HOURS OF WELL ORGANISED WORK

Significant donations of goods came from: estate agent **Philip Webb**, **Eastern Emergency Relief** The Halloween Doorknock by the **Monday Night Small Group**.

These were supplemented by purchases using anonymous donations from **Congregation members**. It is necessary to buy in many items to achieve a balance in the range of goods.

Those smiles were still there, and even more so, when recipients of hampers arrived at set times to pick up their hamper. Genuine expressions of gratitude generate lots of smiles, and even some hugs. Christmas greetings are exchanged and overall is a sense of practical goodwill.

Jill Kidd and her team are to be congratulated for this significant effort arranged through Centre 81. The relief work and "coffee companionship" goes on quietly all year round at Centre 81. The giving of a hamper containing "specials" as well as daily basics is "icing on the cake" for the staff of Centre 81.

The Mountview Congregation salutes you all for your day by day dedication to the needy and the lonely who come in for assistance, or even to sit and have a chat over a cup of coffee. Well done, and thank you.



MARGOT, SUE, JILL AND JENNY WERE STILL SMILING THREE HOURS LATER WHEN THEY HANDED OVER THE HAMPERS TO GRATEFUL RECIPIENTS.

## NATIVITY PLAY, 2015.

Sourcing a Nativity Play every year is a problem. For 2015, it was solved by Kirsten Boxall writing one. She wrote a play about making a play, but unfortunately the number of characters far exceeded the number of available players. The re-writing to squeeze it down to suit the resources lost some of the magic Kirsten envisaged.

Wrapped up in the plot was a lady who had been an angel in a kinder play, but she desperately wanted to be Mary. She finally got her dream - after 35 years, so the play revealed. There was confusion, argument and foot stamping from the donkey players when they were referred to as a mule.

Nobody wanted to be shepherds in this make-believe play – they considered watching sheep to be so-o-o-o bo-o-o-oring, but updating them into “Ninja” shepherds seemed to quell opposition. Their complaints were overshadowed by the Angel Gabriel getting very stroppy with his choir of angels. They wouldn’t sing “Praises” and “Glory”. In the midst of that debacle, the shepherds got the mistaken idea that the angels were really sheep stealers.

A further historical upgrade had the three wise Kings of the Orient arrive by train on the “Orient Express”, the locomotive carrying a big star, so that the wise men, each seated in his own sumptuous carriage, could not possibly get lost following the star.

The family heard of Herod’s intentions and high-tailed it to Egypt- claiming refugee status.

Explaining why they had to flee allowed an explanation of the truth of Jesus’ birth. The angels finally got their singing co-ordinated and the lady who, as a little girl wanted to be mother Mary, got to nurse the baby – some 35 years older.

*[We are indebted to Kirsten envisaging this event for the Mountview young people and drafting the script. At the time she had serious illness in her household so was not able to rewrite the text to suit the casting available (Sue’s sister, Jane undertook this task). However, we are glad that she finally got to be the Mary she had missed out on in her childhood.*

*The summary above was taken from the original text and may not accurately depict what was actually presented. We congratulate all those who pitched in and helped with costuming, scenery and props. Although a few crowns slipped, the wheels did not come off the “Orient Express.” It was all worthwhile. J.W. ]*



We thank Rev. Sandy for providing these photographs.



## IMPORTANT NOTICES CONCERNING YOUNG PEOPLE (OF ALL AGES)

### Stations of the Cross

What will *your* part be in the Stations of the Cross? Maybe you were involved two years ago when Mountview BUGGSS & MUGGs led our first Stations of the Cross? This all-age worship will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016 (Palm Sunday). The MUGGs will be busily scripting parts early in Term 1, so, if you have your heart set on a particular part, be sure to contact Jo Menger Leeman ( details deleted)

The Stations of the Cross will utilise the MUC courtyard for several interactive “stations” based on the Gospel of Luke. Then, carrying the cross with Jesus, we will process past Centre 81 to the cross out at the front for the crucifixion (how gloriously public to passing traffic!), before gathering inside around the entrance of the tomb. Will there be new life? Join in and be immersed in the Easter story.

Do you sew? The older BUGGSS will be sewing costumes of all shapes and sizes. Extra adult helpers are needed in February and March to assist them with the cutting out and use of sewing machine.

*Jo Menger Leeman*

### All-Age Midweek Worship

Watch this space. Ideas are still being formed and discussed in regards to a proposal for MUC to host an all-age midweek worship starting Term 2 (April). Enthusiasm is bubbling. Discussions have started with our neighbouring Uniting Churches for this to be a joint venture. This all-age worship will run 4:30pm-6:30pm, once a month on a mid-week day yet to be decided upon. It will include activity, discussion, and exploration on a biblical theme, interactive worship and a shared meal.

**STOP PRESS!** The usual suspects will not be found toiling away in the kitchen. Rather they (you) have the opportunity to participate in the worship, discussion, activities, prayer and music.

*Jo Menger Leeman*

### Mountview Connect

I'm going to say it out loud (or at least write it in bold). **We are a small church.** So now that it's out there and said, we can stop pretending we are a big church and get to know each other better. We can share our faith stories. We can celebrate each other's birthdays and special events, or make special events to celebrate. We can create moments to notice, listen, share and acknowledge one another - children, adults, older adults. This is the idea behind Mountview Connect.

Starting in Lent, we can sign-up to be *Mountview Connect*-ed. Then, let the *Connect*-ing begin! Send post; share a Lent thought; include your *Connect*-ees in your prayers...

*Jo Menger Leeman*

### BUGGSS and MUGGs Helpers Wanted

**No previous experience required! No preparation expected! Come and join in our fun. A sign-up sheet will be available on 31<sup>st</sup> January or contact Jo Menger Leeman (info deleted)**

**NOTE:** As part of our Safer Churches requirements, all helpers must have a “Working With Children’s Check” (WWCC) with MUC listed on your organisation details. Volunteer checks are free. WWCC application is made online to: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK. **CLICK ON “Application” and follow the instructions for completing the application. You must revisit the site as instructed. If the check is approved, a numbered form will be sent to you. Take it to a Post Office handling passport applications. Here identification will be confirmed. About two weeks after lodgement, your card with photograph will arrive in the mail.**





## Update on Ringpulls:



I can now update you on the latest position regarding the Masonic collection of ringpulls.

Our Church and all the others who have been collecting them will be interested to know that we have added over 500,000 ringpulls which have weighed some 303 pounds. ( for those who know only metrics – this is 138 kg ) Quite a lot through that little once yellow box in our foyer !

These are sold and the proceeds have lately gone to the Children with heart problems. To date we have raised about \$16,000. From 2016, the proceeds will be going to TARALYE which is a charity for deaf children, located on Blackburn Road. I would point out that we want ringpulls from only DRINK cans and NOT those from food cans. These have no valuable metal content and will be just thrown away.

May I thank you all for your collections and hope that you will continue with this wonderful way to turn unwanted ringpulls into money for charity.

As there are some people who have arranged for other clubs to collect them, and we get several large contributions into our Church box, it would be good if this information is passed onto those sources.

Again many thanks,

*Ray Kemke.*

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## Joyce Suto has More Reminiscences to Share

I have been mindful of late of many things:

1. Sixty years in Australia. It was on the 21st of December 1955, that I stepped off the ship Orion on to the shores of Sydney to spend a few exciting days before heading for my relatives' home in Wagga Wagga in time for Christmas. Shortly after, I moved to work in Tasmania and finally to Mitcham and Mountview. My memories have been stirred by the recent news of the disastrous floods in the Hunter Valley. For I shared a cabin with a mother and daughter (the son was in another cabin) who were on their way to join the father, an Anglican Minister in the Hunter Valley. And so naturally we were all anxious to learn the latest situation there, which could be acquired only from the crew.
2. 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wedding of my daughter Julie and son-in-law Tony. They had settled on this particular date as an attractive and easy one to remember - 19191. For me, memorable was the final visit to Australia of my best friend for sixty years, Vera. And we enjoyed wedding preparations then visits to Sydney, New Zealand, Phillip Island etc.
3. Rachel my granddaughter was 16 on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. Not only have I a daughter born on Shakespeare's birthday, but I also a granddaughter born on the 12<sup>th</sup> night! Surely all my visits to the plays (Stratford upon Avon) had some influence? And still of further interest, Rachel has a cousin two weeks older born in a different century! Stephanie was born on Christmas Day, 1999, and Rachel on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2000. I, too, was born on a special day - Lady Day, which this year is most unusually also Good Friday!
4. Twin sisters Maud and Isabel have passed 93 years in spite of each having a broken leg in the past year or so. Each manages to keep track of her many descendants as well as making frequent phone calls to me.

[We thank Dana Nicolau for writing this from Joyce's dictation. Due to failing eyesight, Joyce can no longer write. Ed.]

## THE OLD PHONE ON THE WALL

When I was a young boy, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighbourhood. I remember the polished, old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it.

Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person. Her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. 'Information Please' could supply anyone's number and the correct time.

My personal experience with the genie-in-a-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbour. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer, the pain was terrible, but there seemed no point in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy.

I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the lounge and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver and held it to my ear, "Information, please" I said into the mouthpiece just above my head.

A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear, "Information."

"I hurt my finger.." I wailed into the phone, the tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

"Isn't your mother home?" came the question.

"Nobody's home but me," I blubbered.

"Are you bleeding?" the voice asked.

"No," I replied. "I hit my finger with the hammer and it hurts."

"Can you open the refrigerator?" she asked. I said I could.

"Then chip off a little bit of ice and hold it to your finger," said the voice.

After that, I called "Information Please" for everything. I asked her for help with my geography, and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my maths.

She told me my pet possum that I had caught in the park just the day before, would eat fruit and nuts.

Then, there was the time Petey, our pet canary, died. I called, "Information Please," and told her the sad story. She listened, and then said things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was not consoled. I asked her, "Why is it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to all the families, only to end up as a heap of feathers on the bottom of a cage?"

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Wayne, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in."

Somehow I felt better. Another day I was on the telephone, "Information Please."

"Information," said in the now familiar voice.

"How do I spell fix?", I asked.

All this took place in a small town in the Blue Mountains. When I was nine years old, we moved across to Perth. I missed my friend very much. "Information Please" belonged in that old wooden box back home and I somehow never thought of trying the shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall. As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me.



Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then. I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way to college, my plane touched down in Sydney, New South Wales. I had about a half-hour or so between planes. I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now. Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, "Information Please." Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well.

"Information."

I hadn't planned this, but I heard myself saying, "Could you please tell me how to spell fix?"

There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, "I guess your finger must have healed by now."

I laughed, "So it's really you," I said. "I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time?"

I wonder," she said, "if you know how much your calls meant to me. I never had any children and I used to look forward to your calls."

I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister.

"Please do", she said. "Just ask for Sally."

Three months later I was back in the Blue Mountains. A different voice answered,

"Information." I asked for Sally.

"Are you a friend?" she said.

"Yes, a very old friend," I answered.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you this," she said, "Sally had been working part time the last few years because she was sick. She died five weeks ago."

Before I could hang up, she said, "Wait a minute, did you say your name was Wayne?"

"Yes." I answered.

"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you."

The note said, "Tell him there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean."

I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant.

Lifting you on eagle's wings. May you find the joy and peace you long for. Life is a journey... NOT a guided tour.

[Contributed by "The Leggs". Original source unknown. Revised for Australian readership. Ed. ]



## CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

**The Liturgical Year Moves On.** Advent and Christmas were busy and memorable times for us all, and now it is almost Lent! The congregation's Advent Breakfast on 29 November was well attended and was a joyful occasion where worship and eating were intermingled. Special thanks go to Tim Menger and Simon Plumridge for all the kitchen arrangements and for those who helped them. Our children's Nativity Play and Movie were premiered on 13 December and have been highly acclaimed. The play was written by Kirsten Boxall and adapted by Sue Terrill's sister Jane. The kids who took part were, of course, just charming. Three study groups met during Advent and arrangements are underway for a Lenten series entitled "Finding Light in Darkness".

**Going Further Fund.** This fund currently supports the NOCET Orphanage in Tanzania and it was good to hear an update on the project from Sheryl Taylor (Loose Change Foundation) on 6 December. The retiring offering on the following Sunday raised \$873.45 for the Going Further Fund.

**Mannar Project.** As previously reported, Denyse and Kelvin Ward visited Mannar in Sri Lanka as part of a Uniting Church working party to help redevelop the war-ravaged island. Denyse has been baking huge quantities of mince pies to help fund the provision of cooking equipment and Kelvin's project is to help fund the purchase of an electricity generator. Church Council has approved a donation of \$200 for these projects.

**Regional Cooperation.** 2016 will see a number of events with our neighbouring congregations of The Avenue, Blackburn, Blackburn North-Nunawading and the Grace Community (Burmese at Nunawading). Young Adults from the region held an enjoyable function at Halliday Park on 29 November and a Facebook page has been established to continue the fellowship. This year's Ash Wednesday service will be a combined one at The Avenue Uniting Church, Blackburn on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> February. Watch the notice sheets for details.

**Communication.** Our Mission & Ministry Task Group has had a busy year thinking about ways in which Mountview's work and witness may be more effective. Church Council has accepted the Task Group's recommendation to examine the future of Mountview's magazine "Contact": its purpose, format and management. In addition, the Council has agreed that the Notice Sheet Email List be expanded to allow important and/or urgent information to be rapidly disseminated to members of the Congregation. Some administrative matters, including editorial policies and who should have authority to publish will be resolved in the New Year.

**Congregational Budget for 2016.** Our thanks to Treasurer Peter Cox for his careful preparation of Mountview's 2016 Financial Budget which was approved by the Congregational Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November. It should be noted that this is again a deficit budget so we will need to maintain generous giving in order to "live within our means".

**Church Council Office Bearers.** At its December meeting, Church Council reappointed its office bearers, namely, Chairperson: Rob Jackson, Secretary: Geoffrey Willis, Treasurer: Peter Cox. In addition, our Minister and Denyse Ward are the other two members of the Executive.

**Support Ministries.** Church Council thanks all those folk who coordinate rosters, lead our children, and undertake other duties in support of ministry at Mountview. Then, of course, there are all those folk who fill those rosters and help in so many ways – your willing assistance is very much valued.

**Mental Health Ministry.** For many years Mountview has provided financial support to the Presbytery's Mental Health Minister who has been working with the Eastern Access Community Health organisation based in Ringwood and serving the Maroondah Hospital's Psychiatric Ward. Rev Dr (Deacon) James Godfrey, who has served as mental health minister for the last eight years, has concluded his placement to take up a chaplain's role with the emergency services in the Northern Territory. Arrangements are under way to call someone to continue this important ministry. The Presbytery has acknowledged Mountview's recent donation to this ministry and has asked that the Congregation and Church Council be thanked for "this wonderful and encouraging support".

*Geoffrey Willis, Church Council Secretary*

## HAS CONTACT LOST ITS WAY?



*CONTACT* readers will notice that this issue, celebrating the joy of **Easter**, is well ahead of the date of Easter Day, Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2016. The April issue would have been too late this year to focus on Easter, instead looking over the **Ascension** to **Pentecost**.

So we ask that you accept this issue's theme's early arrival, and remember that we are still in the period of **Epiphany**, about to step into **Lent**, the time of preparation for the great Christian celebration of Jesus' resurrection at **Easter**, and his promise to us of reconciliation with God, our Father.

At this time of the year the Liturgical Seasons follow one another closely, this year, too closely for *CONTACT* to separate. We are not lost, only joyful! As we progress through the long season of **Pentecost**, we can focus on general topics not associated with the Liturgical Calendar.

*CONTACT* endeavours to be a "looking ahead" and an informative publication, focusing on expectations, rather than a record of this is what we did. However, all issues have items in both categories.

By the way, it is not too late to join one of the Lenten study groups. See Page 5 of this issue for details of the study and how to join a group.

M.W.

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## BREAKING DOWN WALLS

*The following story speaks of actions and interfaith relationships which transcend boundaries...*

During World War II, there were Albanian Muslims who risked their lives to hide Jewish people. The Albanians lived by a code of faith and honour called *Besa*. This ancient code, which became part of Albanian Islamic culture and teaching, requires one to provide protection for one seeking asylum. Even if it means putting one's own life in danger and even if it means disregarding a tribal tradition if necessary to save the lives of those seeking asylum.

Albania's prime minister led the way, giving a secret order during the Nazi occupation. "All Jewish children will sleep with your children, all will eat the same food, and all will live as one family."

Albanian Muslims saved 2,000 Jews during the war. It was said that Albania was the only Nazi-occupied country that had a greater number of Jews after the war than before the Holocaust. A touring photo exhibit, *BESA*, tells this story through the faces of those who risked their own lives to live by the code called *Besa* during the Second World War. The exhibition was the result of a five year project of research and portraiture by American photographer Norman H. Gershman. The black-and-white images record and honour the Albanian Muslims, and Muslims from the neighbouring region of Kosovo, who hid and protected Jews from Nazi extermination.

One young mother did not have enough breast milk to feed her son. A Jewish woman she hid nursed him instead. Asked if she minded that a Jewish mother had fed her baby, she replied, "Jews are God's people like us."

*Seasons of the Spirit, 2015.*



## SOME PROPERTY and FINANCE MATTERS

**Hall Floor Rehabilitation:** Six years ago, the hall floor was sanded, sealed, lines painted for basket ball and net ball then had a finish seal applied. The tradesman doing the work told us that as his the third lot of sanding, further sanding would cut through the tongue and groove joins allowing the interlocking strips to break off and the boards to “cup”. The floor would be seriously compromised. So, when this last treatment started to show signs of wear in areas of heavy traffic, P + F sought and received advice that the floor could be maintained indefinitely with a buffing and an application of a hard polyurethane “flood coat” about every five years. As this new top coat would take at least a week to cure and set, the summer holidays would be the only time this could be done. The work was done in the week immediately before Christmas. The fine finish has once more brought the beautiful mountain ash timber to its full glory.



**Brown Room Air Conditioner:** All the basic checks could not reveal the reason for the Brown Room air conditioner not functioning. The a. c. maintenance man put his circuit tester to the task and declared that the neutral line from the switchboard to the unit was broken. He suspected rats. Sure enough, on removing the steel protective duct on the outside brickwork, first there was some fir, then tiny bits of refrigerant pipe insulation and finally, where cables and pipes passed into the brick wall, chewed electrical cables, the copper wires in the neutral being chewed right through! All the damaged lines were replaced, rat baits placed in strategic places, the brick wall entry silicon sealed and the steel duct stuffed with steel wool. We have it on good report that rats have a fascination for the magnetic field surrounding electric cables, making them irresistible to chewing. On the other hand, they dislike intensely chewing on steel wool.

**Folding Tables:** For years, ladies in particular, have grumbled about the difficulty of handling the folding tables in the Brown Room. Also, the P + F Committee has been repairing disconnected leg struts and re-attaching tops to the frame after a table has been dropped. Noting a “special for Christmas” price on moulded plastic topped tables at Bunnings, P + F took quick action. The six displaced tables will be located in the foyer for two weeks for private removal. A nominal donation through any P + F member would be gratefully received.

**Working Bee:** It was a successful morning. The untidy corner of Mountview House has been covered with paint. Storage space is precious. Some storage areas were so over committed they presented danger to anyone trying to extract an item. When other items fell down, difficulty in restacking usually resulted in a mess. The time had arrived for a cleanout, so interested parties were asked to evaluate the worth of items as they were carried out. Fortunately, a great pile was declared worthless and went to the tip. Garden jobs were allocated and done, a dripping tap replaced, a soffit lining repaired, usable space in the Giles Room increased and a morning tea table eaten bare. Shelving racks have been added in the lockup store in the hall, creating ease of access to goods stored.

**Macrandra in Flower:** Take a look at the *Eucalyptus macrandra* in the car park. Despite the dry spring, the flower show is magnificent. This mallee type tree was planted about 48 years ago when the Mountview complex was established. Some beehives round about will be getting a boost from the masses of blossom as well as their attracting flocks of noisy rainbow lorikeets. Unfortunately, Mother Nature doesn't always plan ahead. While the tree is so heavily loaded, even a light shower of rain can add so much extra weight to the branches that they reach the point of breaking. Watch the one leaning out over the tanks to the right.



## FUNNIES

Archbishop Coggan once said, "My ignorance of science is such that if anyone mentioned copper nitrate, I should think he was talking about a policeman's overtime."

The Rev. Sydney Smith was one of the great wits of his day. When a landlord angrily said to him, "If I had a son who was an idiot, I think I would make him a parson." Smith retorted, without batting an eyelid, "I see your father was of a different mind."



*We're first-time visitors. Do you misinterpret Scripture every Sunday, or is this a special series?*

Laughter is the sensation of feeling good all over and showing it principally in one place.



A minister who preached on Psalm 119, verse 71 – "*It is good for me that I was afflicted*" – illustrated his sermon by saying that whereas growth sometimes takes place best in sunlight, at other times a shady spot is preferable. He then continued, "Whereas we plant roses where they will be exposed to sunshine, if we want fuchsias to do well we plant them in the shade." After the sermon, from which he hoped some of his members would derive comfort, a lady thanked him profusely. His heart glowed until she added, "Now I know what is wrong with my fuchsias."



"For those of you who doze through today's sermon, you can find it on our Web site."

## LECTIONARY

**February 7** Transfiguration

Ex 34: 29-35  
 Psalm 99  
 2 Cor 3: 12-4:2  
 Lk 9: 28-36 (37-43a)

**February 10** Ash Wednesday

Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17  
 Psalm 51: 1-17  
 2 Cor 5: 20b-6:10  
 Mat 6:1-6, 16-21

**February 14** Lent 1

Deut 26: 1-11  
 Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16  
 Rom 10: 8b-13  
 Lk 4: 1-13

**February 21** Lent 2

Gen 15: 1-12, 17-18  
 Psalm 27  
 Phil 3: 17-4: 1  
 Lk 13: 31-35

**February 28** Lent 3

Is 55: 1-9  
 Psalm 63: 1-8  
 1 Cor 10: 1-13  
 Lk 13: 1-9

**March 6** Lent 4

Jos 5: 9-12  
 Psalm 32  
 2 Cor 5: 16-21  
 Lk 15: 1-3, 11b-32

**March 13** Lent 5

Is 43: 16-21  
 Psalm 126  
 Phil 3: 4b-14  
 John 12: 1-8

**March 20** Lent 6

Is 50 : 4-9a  
 Psalm 31: 9-16  
 Phil 2 : 5-11  
 Lk 23: 1-49

**March 24** Holy Thursday

Ex 12: 1-4 (5-10, 11-14)  
 Psalm 116: 1-2, 12-19  
 1 Cor 11: 23-26  
 John 13: 1-17, 31b-35

**March 25** Good Friday

Is 52: 13-53-12  
 Psalm 22  
 Heb 10: 16-25  
 John 18: 1-19: 42

**March 27** Easter Day

Acts 10: 34-43  
 Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24  
 1 Cor 15: 19-26  
 John 20: 1-18

**April 3** Easter 2

Acts 5: 27-32  
 Psalm 150  
 Rev 1: 4-8  
 John 20: 19-31

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### STATISTICS FOR ANYBODY?

*“The Age” editorial on 21<sup>st</sup> January discussed the lack of equality in Australia. It bounced from the Davos annual three-day World Economic Forum in Switzerland. The Age hoped that the forum (composed of business leaders, finance ministers, thinkers, philanthropists, journalists, et al.) would seek an opportunity to ameliorate one of humanity’s greatest hindrances - the obscene gap between rich and the poor. The bases for the facts below have been gleaned from that editorial statement.*

One fact- 62 individuals in the world own as much wealth as 3,600,000,000 people – exactly half the world’s population of seven billion.

Another fact – the richest 1% own more than the **combined** wealth of the other 99% in the world.

A further fact – those 62 people mentioned above had their wealth leap by 44% in the past 5 years. The poorest 3.6 billion had theirs drop by 41%.

Still another – more than 8 out of 10 people on the planet live on less than US\$10 per day.

And another – the poorest 40% of the world population receive only 5% of the world income. The richest 20% get 75%.

In Australia, last year, the **combined** wealth of 1,730,000 households couldn’t best that of the richest seven. And furthermore, the richest 20% of Australian households have 71 times that of the bottom 20%.

*Political will and determination built upon an understanding of the causes of inequality have an opportunity, indeed a responsibility, to set programs which will even out the gap. In Australia, we need meaningful proper debate, not a barrage of mindless slogans.*

*The Social Justice Group suggests that any one of the above facts may be used to support argument when writing letters to papers and politicians.*

*Jenny Balshaw, for the Social Justice Group.*

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**CENTRE 81:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday..... 9873 1726

**CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY:**

Monday Night Small Group - Michelle Jackson and Simon Plumridge.....

{BUGGSS (3 years to Grade 5) } Jo Menger

{MUGGs (Grade 6 to Year 8) - }

**CHURCH COUNCIL:**

Chairperson: Rob Jackson .....

Secretary: Geoffrey Willis ...

(For reasons of privacy, personal contact details have been omitted from this "Web" edition of CONTACT)

Treasurer: Peter Cox

Property and Finance: Don Bain

Music Ministry: Geoffrey Willis

**CHURCH OFFICE:** ...



9872 5157

**CONGREGATION:**

Chairperson: Tim Menger ...

Secretary: Lynne Rosenthal

**CONTACT:**

Editor: Margaret Williams

**LEAD STEWARDS:** John Cosstick, Peter Cox, David Rowe. Dana Nicolau.

**LIBRARIAN:**

Kirsten Boxall .....

**MEMBERS' ROLLS & STEWARDSHIP RECORDER:**

David Rowe .....

**MULTI-MEDIA:**

Rob Jackson .....

**PROPERTY BOOKINGS:**

Eddie Short ..... 0447 312 996

**WEB MASTER:**

Rev. Brendan Byrne ...

**WEEKLY NOTICE SHEET:**

Lynne Rosenthal (1<sup>st</sup> half of year) .....

Margaret Cosstick (2<sup>nd</sup> half of year) .....

**YARRA YARRA PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVES:**

David Rowe .....

Geoffrey Willis .....

**CONTACT** is the bi-monthly magazine of Mountview Uniting Church, Mitcham. It is issued on the first Sunday of the months of February, April, June, August, October and December. **Contributions** for the next issue will be due on **Sunday, 19th March, 2016.**