

St Margaret's Anglican Church Eltham



the Parish Matters

Celebrates parish life and reports important items from the most recent Parish Council meeting

Find us on the web at www.stmargaretseltham.org.au/ Facebook at www.facebook.com/stmargaretseltham

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

St Margaret's Anglican Parish Eltham acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we worship. We commit to working for reconciliation and justice for Aboriginal people. Diversity and inclusivity are important to us at St Margaret's.

Prayer at the time of choosing an incumbent

Bountiful God,
give to this parish a faithful pastor
who will faithfully speak your word
and minister your sacraments;
an encourager who will equip your people for ministry
and enable us to fulfil our calling.
Give to those who will choose, wisdom,
discernment and patience,
and to us give warm and generous hearts,
For Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen**

The Hope of Easter

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Our Easter season began with a Palm Sunday gathering at the Yarning Circle seen here in wonderful sunshine and a sense of anticipation of the significant Easter week events which will be almost over when you read this. It is a time for great renewal for all of us.



This follows on from our most successful Taizé service the previous Sunday with over one hundred attendees and an introduction by Br Merric (seen left) who is the only Australian in the Taizé community and comes from Melbourne. There is a report inside this issue.

This is such an exciting delivery of the HeartEdge Vision started last year as most of the attendees were first-time at St Margaret's. It comes as the result of the efforts of many, and coordinated this year by Helen Robertson and supported on rotation by the Parish Councillors.

A big thank you to all involved.



Parish Council Report

At the last Parish Council meeting chaired by Rev Linda we covered the following agenda items:

- Business Arising from last meeting: it was noted no new applications for music scholarships have been received so far.
- Action List: the issue of payment to vergers was discussed and a decision was made that such payments be formalised.
- Correspondence: a donation to St Margaret's of \$2270 was received from the Combined Churches Op Shop, together with a request for assistance with costs for the fitting out of the new premises.
- Vicar's Report: a big thank you to Helen Robertson for coordinating Taizé services, which have been extremely successful.
- Finance Report: John Humann noted that the finances of the parish were healthy. There was discussion on issues of Land Tax and property Insurance, both of which are subject to Diocesan policies.
- Subcommittee reports were received from Pastoral Care, Property, Do Justice, Marketing & communication. There is a suggestion to re-jig the St Margaret's website, and a firm proposal will be developed. There is also an application being prepared for a grant from the Nillumbik Community Fund to assist in upgrading the yarning circle and labyrinth to provide wheelchair access, indigenous plantings, as well as a "finger labyrinth" in the form of a mounted bronze panel.
- Brief updates were provided on each of the HeartEdge projects for 2023, namely the Memory Care Cafe, September Concert, Yarning Circle, Taize services, and a fifth one added as a proposed revival of SAGE St Margaret's Action Group for the Environment.

John Humann

Taizé - Song Praise and Prayer - a Celebration

The Spirit is truly blessing and hovering over our wonderful end-of-month celebrations.

Sunday 26th March saw gathered 113 people from far and wide come and join our celebration with Brother Merric from the Taizé Community in France. It was eye-opening to see the huge numbers across Europe who flock to join in the celebrations held in so many countries. We may not be that big yet but were the largest group Brother Merric had

experienced in Australia. As our Vicar Linda would say, "the Spirit is with us".



Our world has changed and the search by many for the Spirit or missing link in their lives has also. Our sincere thanks for such dedicated work is offered to Brother Merric, Heidi Bryce, Robert Street, Helen Coutts, Jim Campbell and his wife (from Templestowe), and Rob McKenzie for generously giving of their time carefully putting the service together.



There were a number of others who assisted in setting up they too have contributed to the overall success of our wonderful celebration.

We look forward to seeing you all again during the coming months.

Helen Robertson Coordinator: 0434 878 246

St Margaret's Kitchen

Some years ago our church was extended & internally linked to the hall & facilities.

The hall & facilities then underwent renovation & refurbishment. It was such a privilege & delight to

walk into the new fully fitted out commercial style kitchen.



The hall & kitchen are in use most days both for parishioners & the wider community.

Therefore, the Nillumbik Council conducts an annual audit of the kitchen facilities to ensure they are compliant with their regulations. The Certificate of Registration can be viewed at all time on the fridge door.

The parish use of the kitchen mainly entails limited food handling & storage & as such there is no requirement for those using the kitchen to have a certificate of food handling.

However, it is a strong recommendation from the council that all parishioners using the kitchen avail themselves of a short, free, on-line course to improve knowledge of safe food handling.

This is available at

<http://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au>

I recently did this course in preparation for serving afternoon tea to the participants of The Memory Care Cafe. I found it valuable to refresh my skills & learn some new information.

Coralie Carew

Property Progress

We are so fortunate to have such lovely grounds. The Property Committee is responsible to ensure our grounds and buildings are maintained. Not an easy task. But...the old tennis court fence on John St has now been removed and replaced by a more attractive one.



Removing the tennis court fence from the other end has proved to be a great decision and has opened up the whole area. The next task is to replace the

wire fence between the Vicarage and the labyrinth and replant. Another task, the old gutters on Dendy House have just been replaced. Next is to replace the notice board.

Continuing task is to keep up the gardening, cleaning, weeding ... never ends really. With thanks to those who have helped in so many ways.

Sally Petty

Former St Meg's Family Wedding

At St Margaret's on Saturday 18th March we experienced the joyous occasion of the wedding of Melissa Hirth & James Constable. The Hirth family have been associated with our church over many years with Melissa's mother Sheryl teaching Sunday School in Ron Dowling's time.

The bride chose to enter the church through the old west



door, & came down a central aisle through the church to the ceremony at the front in the new part of the church. Melissa was accompanied down the

aisle by her father & preceded by her two boys. Keren Terpstra, Dean of Sale, & recently Vicar at St Margaret's, conducted the service as she had previously baptized the couple's two boys.

The church was full of friends & family to witness the occasion & the outside of the church provided a wonderful backdrop for many photos.

Coralie Carew

Anglicare News

At the recent meeting in Banyule of the Anglicare Partnership Groups in 5 parishes, the list of most desirable donations from parishioners was given: Jocks and winter-weight socks for the men who collect a breakfast from St Peter's and St Mark's, nappies for young mothers, as well as donations of

toiletries in motel style packages, the usual supplies of cereals, long life milk, rice and pasta.

In addition, Anglicare is aware of the strain of the current and continuing increasing fuel costs for families. As a result, it has set up a community outreach program to help people apply for the government \$250 Saving Bonus.

Yes, many people at St Margaret's would have already applied through web pages on the internet. But Anglicare is setting up a team for helping people apply if they cannot access the internet.

- 1) Have a copy of your most recent electricity bill.
- 2) Have your bank details at hand.
- 3) Have compared your electricity price with at least one other provider
- 4) Contact Anglicare Victoria 's Community Outreach Program on **1800 531 741** (or email **energy@anglicarevic.org.au**)

It would be good at our next meeting on May 16th if we can report that a number of people at St Margaret's are now signed up. (Tell Sally Petty or Jo Norman or jenny Disney when you get the bonus)

Jenny Disney

Holy Week is Happening

As we go to press.



After Palm Sunday began at the Yarning Circle.(as can be seen front page) the service continued under this heavenly roof.



Tuesday was Tenebrae (Service of the Shadows)

Easter Reflections

I thank Diana Warrell for sharing her recollection of a Good Friday service that has stayed with her throughout the years.

My first experience of Taizé was when I went to a Good Friday Service many years ago at St. Margaret's. The memory of the large wooden cross carried in by a strong parishioner who we were all invited to touch, it was very moving as we chanted.

We sang "Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom" We sang it without played music. It was full of compassion and belief. It was followed by "O Lord hear my prayer. When I call answer me. Come and Listen to me" Part of me was feeling how selfish we are to be asking to be remembered when we were remembering someone who had been brutally treated and had given their life for us. But this was followed by "Bless the Lord my soul and bless his Holy Name. Bless the Lord my soul who leads me into life.

It became a mixture of grief and hope and purpose which I felt was strengthened by the following chant" Ubi Caritas (where charity and love are). Ubi Caritas Deus ibi est (where charity is there is God)

Indigenous Australian Religion, Mythology and Spirituality

Introduction

Geoff Sandy introduced the Faith Issues discussion in February with this summary. This week, when the Resurrection is a focus of our thoughts and wonder, this outline of the First Nations' RMS may be a useful extension.

The Dreamtime (the Dreaming)

According to Aboriginal belief, all life as it is today - Human, Animal, Bird and Fish is part of one vast

unchanging network of relationships which can be traced to the great spirit ancestors of the Dreamtime. The Dreamtime continues as the "Dreaming" in the spiritual lives of aboriginal people today. The events of the ancient era of creation are enacted in ceremonies and danced in mime form. Song chant incessantly to the accompaniment of the didgeridoo or clap sticks relates the story of events of those early times and brings to the power of the dreaming to bear on life today. The Dreamtime is the Aboriginal understanding of the world, of its creation, and its great stories. The Dreamtime is the beginning of knowledge, from which came the laws of existence. For survival these laws must be observed.

The Dreaming world was the old time of the Ancestor Beings. They emerged from the earth at the time of the creation. Time began in the world the moment these supernatural beings were "born out of their own Eternity". The Earth was a flat surface, in darkness. A dead, silent world. Unknown forms of life were asleep, below the surface of the land. Then the supernatural Ancestor Beings broke through the crust of the earth from below, with tumultuous force. The sun rose out of the ground. The land received light for the first time. The supernatural Beings, or Totemic Ancestors, resembled creatures or plants, and were half human. They moved across the barren surface of the world. They travelled hunted and fought and changed the form of the land. In their journeys, they created the landscape, the mountains, the rivers, the trees, waterholes, plains and sandhills. They made the people themselves, who are descendants of the Dreamtime ancestors. They made the Ant, Grasshopper, Emu, Eagle, Crow, Parrot, Wallaby, Kangaroo, Lizard, Snake, and all food plants. They made the natural elements: Water, Air, Fire. They made all the celestial bodies: the Sun, the Moon and the Stars. Then, wearied from all their activity, the mythical creatures sank back into the earth and returned to their state of sleep. Sometimes their spirits turned into rocks or trees or a part of the landscape. These became sacred places, to be seen only by initiated men. These sites had special qualities.

Songlines

A songline is also called a dreaming track of important sites and locations. They trace the journey of ancestral spirits as they created the world and lore to be followed. Often markers were used to ensure you were on the right track, eg a Wurundjeri marker is a scar-tree (Yingabeal) near the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Bullen. So called Yinga = sing/ song and Beal = Red Gum.

Australian Indigenous Spirituality

Spirituality is at the core of the indigenous being - the very identity. It gives meaning to all aspects of life. All objects are living and share the same spirit or soul. There is kinship with the environment. Indigenous people express their spirituality in different ways including ceremony "caribberie", rituals, totems, paintings, storytelling, music, dance and songs.

Totemic Belief

Through systems of totemic belief, individuals and groups are linked in many different ways to both the things of nature and the all-powerful beings of the spiritual realm. Totemic beliefs are more highly elaborated among Aboriginal people than among any other people. Totemism has been defined as a representation of the universe seen as a moral and

social order, a worldview that regards humanity and nature as one corporate whole, or a set of symbols forming a conventional expression of the value system of a society. Such symbols provided intermediate links, both personal and social, between humans and the mythic beings. Many of the mythic beings in Australia are totemic in the sense of exemplifying in their own persons, or outward forms, the common life force pervading particular species. Others, originating in human or near-human form, at the end of their wanderings entered some physiographic feature, were metamorphosed as hills or rocks, or turned into various creatures or plants.

Totemism's importance lies in providing individuals and groups with direct and life-sustaining links back to the very beginnings of society itself, the Dreaming, and to the enormous powers emanating from the spiritual realm. Conception totemism connects individuals to particular places and events and provides them with a unique account of their coming into being. It thus underpins individual identity while at the same time linking a person to many others who share similar associations. The plants, animals, or minerals that are selected as totems are not in themselves of religious significance, though in the case of foods a person may choose not to eat his or her totem, considering it to be of the same flesh. What is important is the connections symbolized by totems—the ties that bind people simultaneously to one another, to sites in the physical world, and to the omnipotent spiritual powers on which all worldly life depends.

Pan-Australian Indigenous Mythology

Rainbow Serpent -The Rainbow Serpent is generally and variously identified by those who tell 'Rainbow Serpent' myths, as a snake of some enormous size often living within the deepest waterholes of many of Australia's waterways; descended from that larger being visible as a dark streak in the *Milky Way*. It reveals itself to people in this world as a rainbow as it moves through water and rain, shaping landscapes, naming and singing of places, swallowing and sometimes drowning people, strengthening the knowledgeable with rainmaking and healing powers, blighting others with sores, weakness, illness, and death. Known by different indigenous names throughout Australia.

Captain Cook – A number of linguists, anthropologists and others have formally documented a common indigenous myth occurring across Australia. Predecessors of the myth tellers encounter a mythical, exotic (most often English) character who arrives from the sea, bringing western colonialism, either offering gifts to the performer's predecessors or bringing great harm upon the performer's predecessors. The many indigenous versions of this Captain Cook myth are rarely oral recollections of encounters with the Lieutenant James Cook

A Local Australian Indigenous Myth - Murrinh-patha

Country saltwater land Northern Territory. Life is good and benevolent, but throughout life's journey, there are numerous painful sufferings that each individual must come to understand and endure as he grows. This is the underlying message repeatedly being told within the Murrinh-patha myths. It is this philosophy that gives Murrinh-patha people motive and meaning in life. The following Murrinh-patha myth, for instance, is performed in ceremonies to initiate young men into adulthood. "A woman, *Mutjinga* (the 'Old Woman'), was in charge of

young children, but instead of watching out for them during their parents' absence, she swallowed them and tried to escape as a giant snake. The people followed her, spearing her and removing the undigested children from the body. Within the myth and in its performance, young, unadorned children must first be swallowed by an ancestral being (who transforms into a giant snake), then regurgitated before being accepted as young adults with all the rights and privileges of young adults.

Life (Birth)

A child's spirit was held to come from the Dreaming to animate a foetus. In some cases, this was believed to occur through an action of a mythic being who might or might not be reincarnated in the child. Even when Aboriginal people acknowledged a physical bond between parents and child, the most important issue for them was the spiritual heritage. For Aboriginal people, birth and death were an open-ended continuum: a spiritual religious power emerged from the Dreaming, was harnessed and utilized through initiation (as symbolic death-rebirth) and subsequent religious ritual, and finally, on death, went back into the Dreaming. Life and death were not seen as being diametrically opposed. The Dreaming provided a thread of life, even in physical death.

Initiation (coming of age)

Initiation of boys in Aboriginal Australia was a symbolic re-enactment of death in order to achieve new life as an adult. As a novice left his camp, the women would wail and other noises would be made, symbolizing the voice of a mythic being who was said to swallow the novice and later vomit him forth into a new life. The initiation rites themselves were a focal point in discipline and training; they included songs and rituals having an educational purpose. All boys were initiated, and traditionally there were no exceptions. Circumcision was one of the most important rites over the greater part of Australia.

For girls, puberty was marked by either total or partial seclusion and by food taboos (also applied to male novices). Afterward they were decorated and ritually purified. Ritual defloration and hymen cutting were practiced in a few areas, but, in general, puberty among girls was not ritually celebrated.

Marriage

Reciprocity was a fundamental rule in Aboriginal kinship systems and also in marriage. Marriage was not simply a relationship between two persons. It linked two families or groups of kin, which, even before the union was confirmed and most certainly afterward, had mutual obligations and responsibilities. Generally, throughout aboriginal Australia those who received a wife had to make a repayment either at the time of marriage or at some future time. In the simplest form of reciprocity, men exchanged sisters, and women brothers. Such exchanges took place between different moieties, clans, or families. Most kinship-and-marriage systems provided for the possible replacement of spouses and for parent surrogates. Infant betrothal was common. Although most men had only one wife at a time, polygyny was considered both legitimate and good.

Death

Most indigenous believe that the spirit of the dead goes to the Land of the Dead, of the Dreaming. Notions of heaven and hell are not part of their beliefs. So the idea of an indigenous afterlife with rewards or punishments

does not exist. Traditionally burial was in two stages: [1] the corpse was left to decay on a platform [2] bones dispersed around country. A dead persons name could not be said because his spirit could be recalled and disturbed. After colonisation the rule was adapted for images.

The Wurundjeri

The people are (Wurundjeri) of the language group (Woi Wurrung), one of the five language groups that comprise the Kulin nation. They identify with the Wurun (Manna Gum) beside the Yarra (Birrarung) where "djeri" – a grub is found in or near the trees. So, the Wurundjeri are the **Witchetty Grub People**. They are the custodians of the Yarra (Birrarung) and a large area of Melbourne (Narrm). The Wurundjeri people believe an ancestral Wedge-tailed Eagle called 'Bunjil' created the land. Bunjil originated from a falling star, and as he fell from the sky, he blew air from his beak to create the earth we live on today. He scratched in the soil with his talons, and the first trees and plants started to grow. Bunjil is the Ancestral Wedge-tailed Eagle, the creator. Waa is the Ancestral Crow, the protector. Bunjil created much of south-eastern Australia and the features and animals within it. He also created people, by breathing life into figures moulded from clay. He created the Kulin nation. Long ago Bunjil, the Wedge-Tail Eagle, was a very powerful man. He was the headman of the Kulin. Bunjil had two wives and a son whose name was Binbeal, the Rainbow, whose wife was the second bow, sometimes seen showing fainter than the first.

Geoff Sandy 25/01/2023 Reproduced with permission

Men's Breakfast Dinner Postponed

At the last breakfast it was decided to postpone the May 6 proposed dinner to celebrate our silver anniversary as many (surprisingly?) wished to watch the Coronation and more importantly the chief cook will be in Canada. The new date will be advised soon.

Editor this edition Harry

Pics: Sally, Rob, Sandra, Diana and Harry

Next edition. Copy May 9

Let us know what you would like more of (and less?)