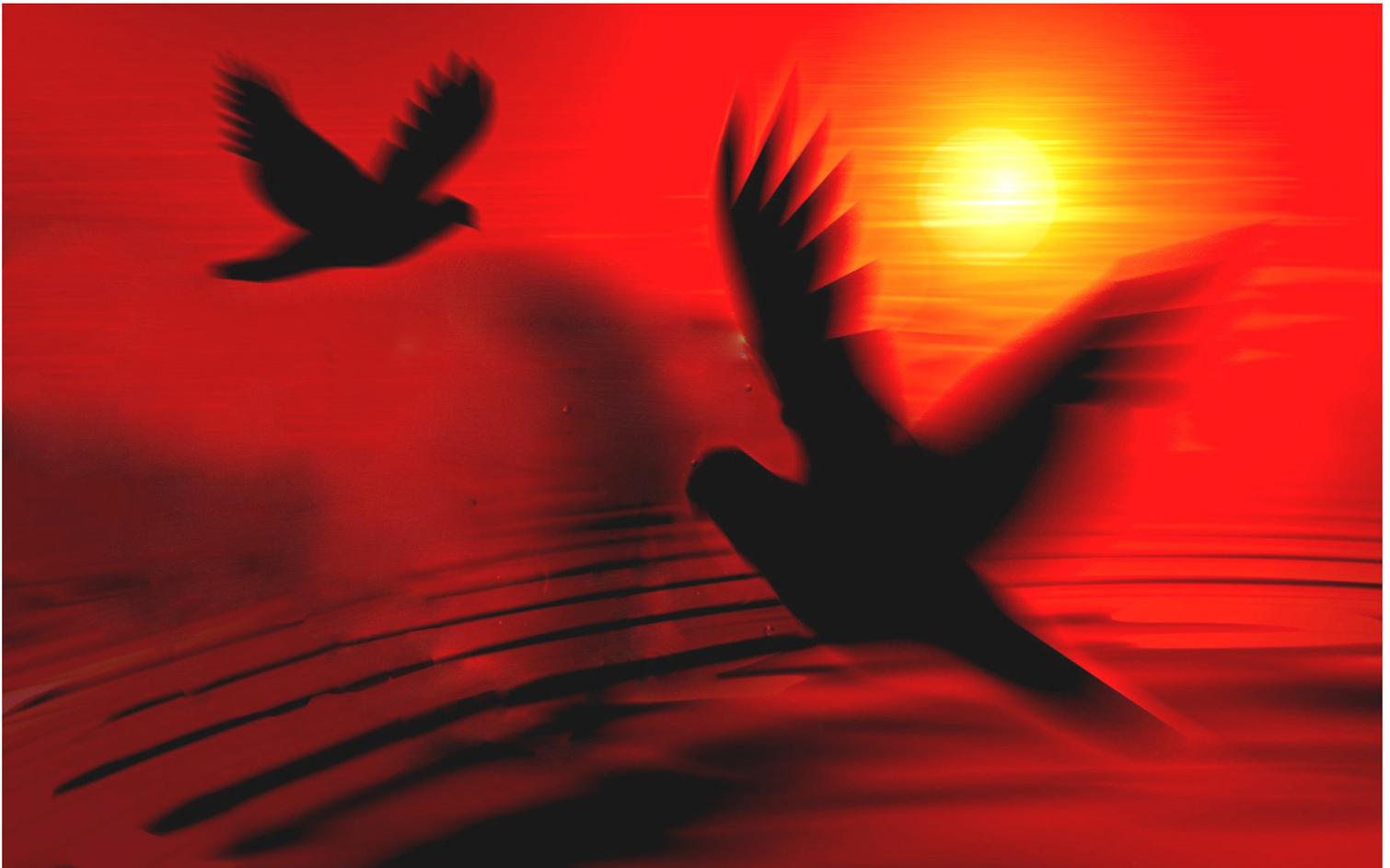


# St Stephen's Uniting Church in the city

*In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity*

## VISION

Autumn 2018



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# Editorial

**T**he great painters of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through to the present day have all been challenged in depicting the coming of the Holy Spirit. The modern image on the cover of this edition of *Vision* is no exception to the difficulty of how we might try to present this event. Acts 2: 1 – 4a records the coming of the Holy Spirit among the disciples *“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit . . .”*

Such a momentous event which we all probably struggle to envisage. Within this magazine a number of our congregants have written about what Pentecost means to them personally through music and poetry, or for the church as a whole, or what it meant for the disciples and the early church, or likened fire that creates new growth in the Australian bush to the new life created in us through the Holy Spirit. However you view Pentecost, all our writers would agree that the Spirit dwells in us *“and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

The Harpers have been in Narromine relieving the lay people for just over four weeks and write about conditions in the country at the moment – all very dry. There is also a reminder that the visit by St Stephen’s to Narromine will take place over the June long week-end, travelling out on Friday 8 and returning to Sydney on Monday 11. Talk to those who visited during 2017 and hear about the wonderful time they had staying with their hosts and seeing life in the country first hand. Mark it in your diary and let Alan and Lauris know by 18 May if you’re able to come. First come first served.

There are three profiles in this edition: our student Minister Andrew Jago, Sheena Wiard and Christine Morling. All have interesting stories to tell. There is a new look back page with notices regarding the church and information about a new monthly service which Ken has commenced on a Wednesday evening. If you like something a little different, would like to worship after work and have a meal with other like-minded people, then this is for you.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Vision* and pray that you are filled with the Holy Spirit at this time of Pentecost.

**Lauris Harper**

**U**p & Go is a breakfast drink offered on supermarket shelves by our Adventist friends to give us energy to get going into the day. 'Up and go' could be the name for this time of year in the liturgical calendar as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church as it continues into the future. The Holy Spirit of Jesus is the spark to give energy for Jesus' mission to go into the world and offer the Kingdom of God.

As a university vacation job I worked at Rookwood Cemetery cleaning up blackberry bushes around tombstones, digging those foot deep holes in plots where the backhoe could not reach between old graves, and mowing the paths between the often low-walled or wrought iron fenced graves.

A young relative rang recently as their lawn mower had cut out in their backyard and wouldn't restart. Spark plug, I thought. My generation had more to do with the spark plug. Tuning and the oil change of our first cars, cleaning the spark plugs, checking the gap,

and listening to the clicks of the timing, and for me, maintaining the dusty lawn mowers of Rookwood. The spark plug was often the issue for a faulty lawnmower. After a soaking in petrol in a jam tin and a scrub with the wire brush, the mower would splutter, blow out some smoke, and then roar.



The Holy Spirit is the spark that jumps in the spark plug of the church and gives the 'up and go' to the people of God. Our young friend, whose mower was idle on the half-mown lawn, had the mower, the spark plug, the lead, but the spark could not make the connection. It's now fixed. He still had to mow the lawn though. The spark plug didn't do all the work. With a bit of cleaning and adjusting: we're firing away! So it is for the church in every generation.

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and, with the spark of your love, kindle a flame of sacred fire within us.*

*Then, to God's glory, we shall be created, and you, Holy Spirit, shall renew the face of the earth.*

*Holy Spirit, come.*

*Amen.*

*Rev Ken Day*

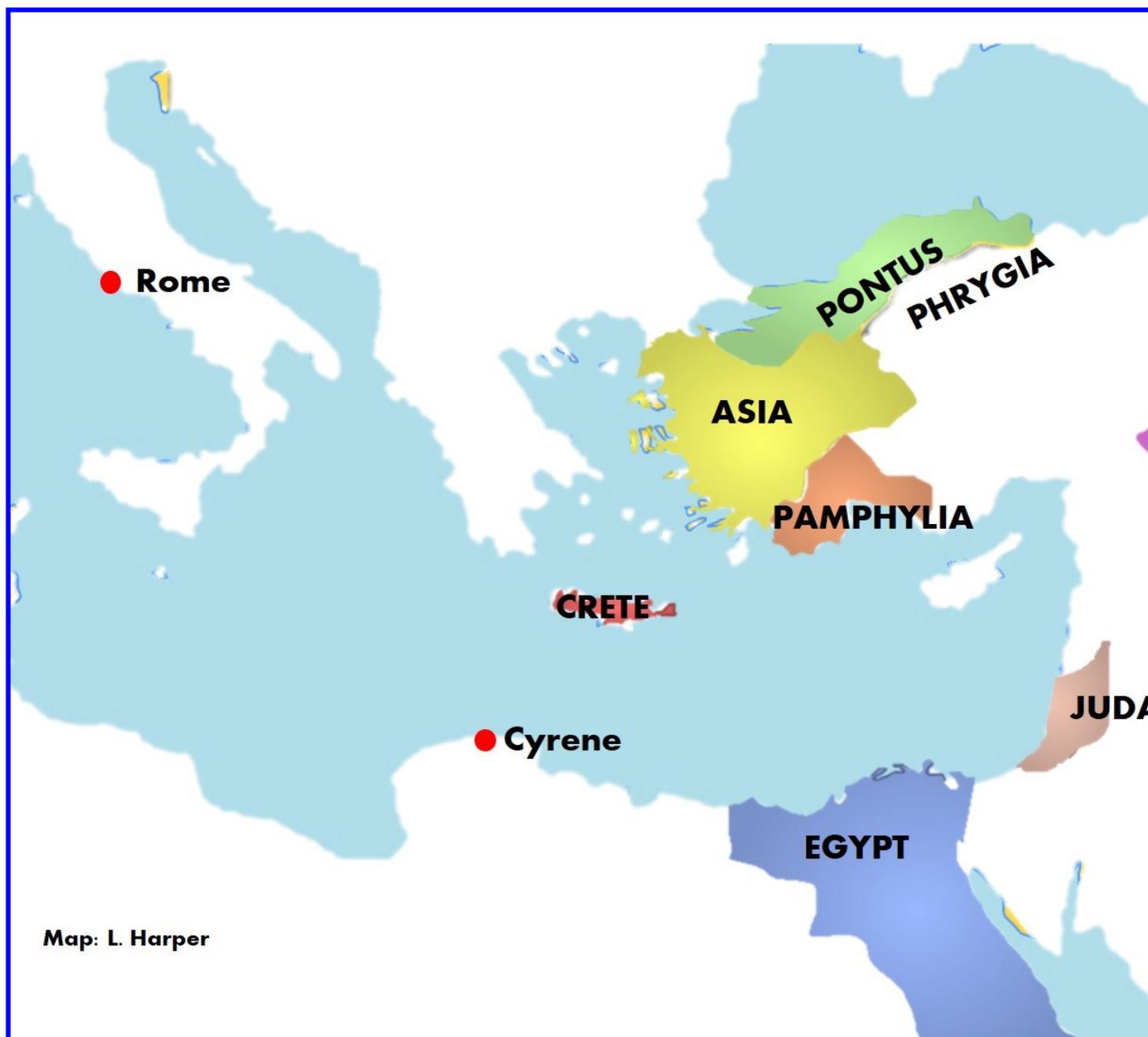
# From our Minister

# PENTECOST:

**I**t's ironic that, like Easter, the day often described as the "birthday of the Church" bears a name borrowed from a different faith. "Pentecost" was the name applied by Greek-speakers to the Jewish Festival of Weeks, and referred to the method of determining its date (fifty days after Passover). Thus, long before the time of Jesus, Greek-speaking Jews spoke of Pentecost.

And so the festival which had drawn so many people to Jerusalem at the time of the events described by Luke in Acts 2 had nothing to do with Jesus, his

resurrection or his followers. Theoretically, all able-bodied Jewish men were required to travel to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple at this festival; and despite the fact that this injunction was impossible for, or ignored by, many in the wide diaspora of Jews, Jerusalem will have been full of visitors. As indeed Luke describes it – there were Parthians, Medes and Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, Crete, Arabia and even Rome. Plot these places onto a map, and most of the eastern Mediterranean world is represented. Yet it was without doubt at this Jewish festival, with these



# A New Beginning

Jewish people from throughout the eastern Roman Empire as witnesses, that the Christian Church was born.

It may seem strange not to count the Church's birth from the central event of Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus. Had Jesus not risen to new life, there would, there could, be no new faith. Christianity is the celebration of the grace and forgiveness of God revealed by the suffering of God himself on the cross, his death, and his resurrection to defeat the power of sin. It is with good reason that the Church universal

bursts into joyful celebration and worship every Easter Sunday, and has done with undiminished enthusiasm for two millennia. Easter is our salvation.

But it was the coming of the Holy Spirit which set the new believers and their new faith apart from the faith of God's peoples in former years. The essential difference was simple but profound: previously, God's Spirit had dwelt *among* his peoples; henceforth, God's Spirit would dwell *within* his people. Literally, within them. Jesus had promised this incredible event.

*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you in all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:13-16)*

No doubt the disciples who first heard these words had no idea what Jesus was talking about. The reality of the Trinity had not yet become apparent. Despite glimpses of the truth, such as Peter's declaration, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God," G (Matthew 16:16), the penny had not yet dropped that Jesus was God incarnate, God himself come to dwell among them as a human being. Jesus' promise of the Spirit, and talk of the relationship between the Father and the Spirit and himself, would simply have confused and mystified the disciples. How could it have been otherwise?

Until it all struck like a thunderbolt at Pentecost. "Thunderbolt" was not the metaphor chosen by Luke; his was a violent wind and tongues of fire lapping at the apostles. Probably neither truly captures the drama of the moment that so affected all those present. The Bible is full of inadequate metaphors seeking to



describe the presence of God. Some experiences are beyond words.

Yet words were one part of the immediate effect of the drama. The time since Jesus' resurrection had been one of preparation. It is clear that Jesus revealed a great deal to the disciples in this time, granting them insights and understandings that would have been impossible for them before they had witnessed the resurrection. The community of Christians had stuck together, choosing Matthias to take the place of Judas in leadership. All was in readiness. But it was only as a result of the drama of Pentecost – as an immediate, direct result – that Peter stood among a crowd, gathered for quite a different celebration, to preach the first ever Christian sermon. “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). We are told that about three thousand people became Christians that day (2:41). The Christian Church had been born. And the architect of the Church was the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Pentecost, who has been the precious gift of the Church ever since that day.

That the Spirit now dwells *within* us is both a daunting and an exhilarating prospect. That each follower of the risen Lord Jesus literally has a God-presence within them is surely a gift beyond words. The Spirit's work is to build us up, and in building us up, to build up the Church. With the Spirit, our potential can be unlimited, if we nurture the life of the Spirit within us; if we feed on Word and Sacrament and prayer, and allow the Spirit to flourish as part of us. With the Spirit within us, we embody Pentecost and we live as the body of Christ.

May our celebration of the Church's birthday truly reflect the profound gift given by God to his children on that epochal day in Jerusalem!

*Alan Harper OAM*

# PENTECOST

**I**n Australia wind and flame carry one overwhelming meaning – bushfire. Immediately our thoughts quite correctly turn to the threat to bushland, animals, homes and people, and the possible loss of life. We probably all know someone who is involved in the Rural Fire Service (RFS) or State Emergency Services (SES) who will be battling the blazes. But fire in Australia is not all bad news. In fact it can also be life giving. While no one likes the sight of a burned forest, fire is important for the functioning of a number of ecosystems and many plants have specific adaptations that respond to fire for reproductive purposes.

Some plants, such as the *Eucalyptus*, *Hakea* and *Banksia*, have serotinous cones or fruits that are completely sealed with resin. These cones/fruits can only open to release their seeds after the heat of a fire has physically melted the resin. Other *Eucalypt* species have buds under the bark which, after burning, emerge to produce new leaves and branches (epicormic growth). Some *Banksia* species and other shrubs have swollen stem bases or underground woody organs (lignotubers) from which new shoots can emerge.

To take advantage of the ash-fertilized soil, the Australian grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*) is able to flower prolifically after a fire. Its conspicuous flower



# ST: Fire

spikes are often the first sign that the plant has survived a blaze. The Tasmanian ray flower (*Cyphanthera tasmanica*), a rare plant found at Freycinet, may disappear for years in the absence of fire and then germinate following a fire. Some native orchids only flower immediately after fire and sprout from bulbs which may have lain dormant in the soil for up to 20 years.

Fire can be life giving, and just as we see new life emerge in our Australian bush, so in the book of Acts we see the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost through fire and flame. The tongues of fire *“rested on each of them”* (2:3), just as the tongues of fire rest on individual plants; and Peter explained to the crowd that Joel had prophesied that God would *“pour out his Spirit on all [the] people”* (2:17). The Spirit gives us all new life.

**Lauris Harper**



# PENTECOST

**D**uring my 22 years as Rector of Chester Hill with Sefton, we used mainly familiar hymns to accompany the regular lectionary (the plan of Sunday readings) but sometimes sang new hymns, and at times I wrote one for a special occasion. The one below was certainly *not* one of the best but we sang it once or twice for what the Book of Common Prayer names Whitsunday, now often called Pentecost.

England's Whitsun Walks on its sadly now abolished Whitsun holidays, and our Whitsunday Islands, and Larkin's poem, The Whitsun Weddings, are reminders of the traditional name. I tend to think it comes not from the white clothing of the newly baptised, for that was worn also on Easter Day and indeed at all christenings, but from "wit", that is, wisdom ("keep your wits about you"). The book of Proverbs speaks of Wisdom, and we celebrate Hagios Sophia, Sancta Sophia, the Holy Spirit of God, on this lovely festival.

Recently American (?) influence has led to poinsettia being associated with Christmas but in our C. of E. churches, when I grew up, its red flame-like leaves (or bracts) in autumn linked it with the story in Acts 2 of the "day of Pentecost" and our churches were always decorated with poinsettia on Whitsunday. From what part of my mind some

of the words of the hymn come from and what exactly they all mean I am not sure ! However, our mellow autumn comes after our escape from the "Egyptian" heat of summer.

This hymn could be sung to "St George" to which we sing "Christ the Lord is risen today", appropriately since Whitsunday or Pentecost concludes our Eastertide.

*Pentecost poinsettia  
with its fiery Whitsun flame  
tells of one wise, warming day  
when God's holy Spirit came  
sounding like a mighty wind,  
nonetheless re-birthing calm;  
that same Spirit genders joy,  
spendthrift offers christening balm.*

*Celebrate the Spirit's gifts,  
seen in Jesus, sane and clear;  
with the Spirit's harvesting  
God's own autumn time is here  
to be melded with God's peace,  
mellow walk at Whitsuntide:  
Babel, Babylon are felled,  
beauty, goodness, truth abide.*

*Rev John Bunyan*





## The Holy Spirit - God's gift

**G**od is Love, and love is his first gift, containing all others. God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Pentecost is the festival when Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is regarded as the birthday of the Christian Church.

The symbols of Pentecost are the flame, wind and the dove, which represent the Holy Spirit. For me, Pentecost is a happy festival; Ministers in our church wear robes with red, as do the Choir, as a symbol of the flames in which the Holy Spirit came to earth. Lovely Hymns sung at Pentecost include one of my favourites, *O Breath of Life, come sweeping through us.*

*Judith Barton*

# PENTECOST

**Ev'ry time I feel the spirit moving in my heart, I will pray**

**T**hroughout all of history, there has never been a more powerful way to share the Christian message than through the spiritual gift of music. In the Middle Ages, two monks chanting different musical lines at the same time gave birth to Notre Dame polyphony – a music that struck Western culture with a newfound awe and reverence for God. In the wake of the Protestant Reformation, congregations sang hymns together for the first time, creating a spiritual unity of God's people through music that has carried the Good News to all corners of the Earth. During the American Civil War, African American spirituals were the anchor with which slaves clung on to messages of hope and salvation in dark times.

Music is a beacon of spiritual truth for all times. This Pentecost, I pray that the Holy Spirit moves in the hearts of God's people at St Stephen's.

*Nico Tjoelker*

## Reflections on the significance of Pentecost

**T**he passage in Acts Chapter 2 describing the visitation of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost has been the subject of both devotion and disbelief, reverence and fear – and has provided discussion for theologians and inspiration for poets like William Blake, and artists like Giotto, Titian and Van Dyke.

The intensity and energy of the moment, captured by Mark DeBolt in his Pentecost *Villanellette*, are palpable:

*“Not as a dove the Holy Spirit came  
To the disciples gathered in a room  
But as a violent wind and tongues of flame  
A cyclone roared the ineffable name  
As fire on each blushing brow did bloom  
Not as a dove the Holy Spirit came.”*

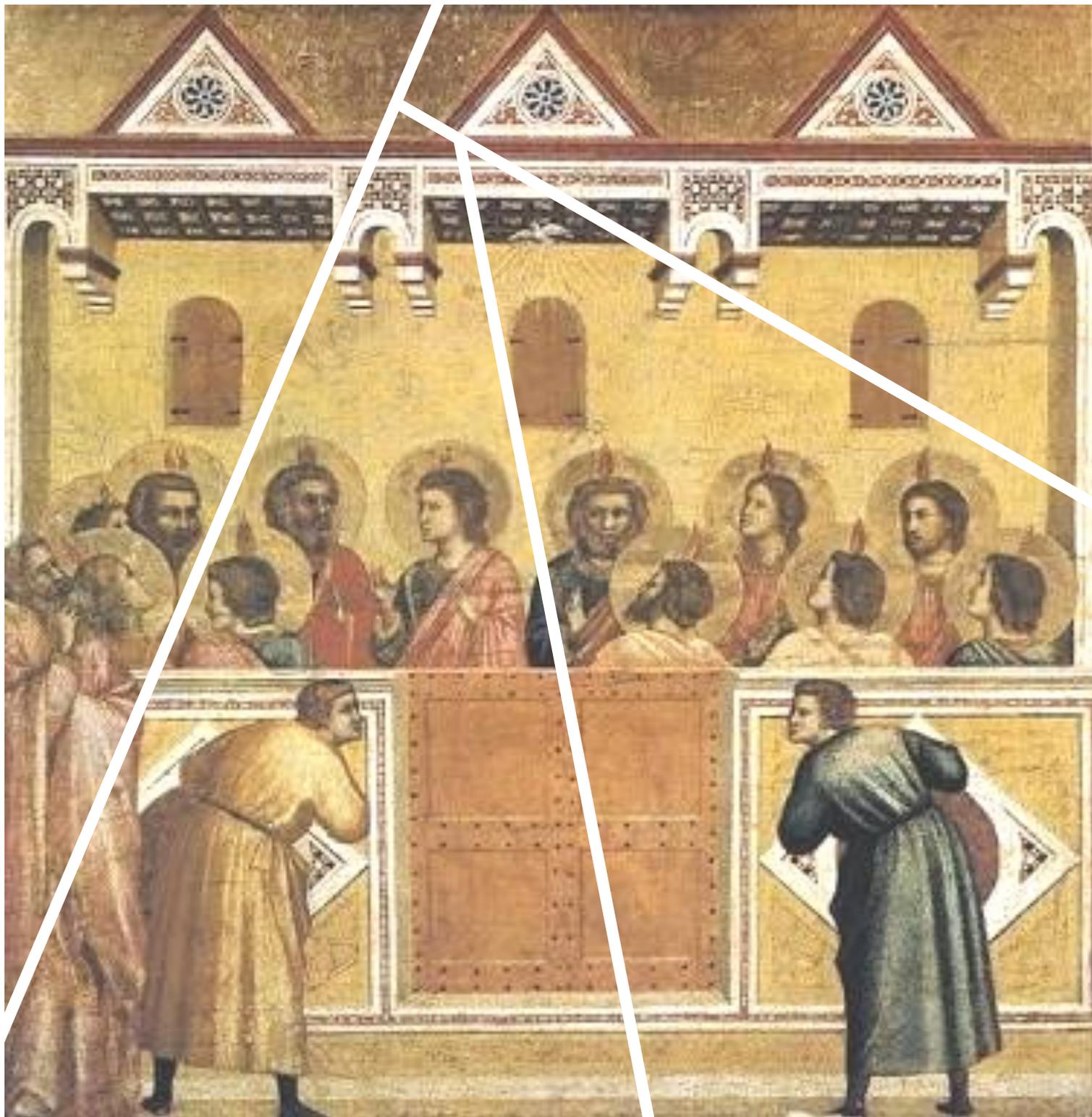
This was not the Holy Spirit of Luke's gospel descending as a dove at Christ's baptism, but a more powerful manifestation. It resulted in the birth of the early church with the addition of three thousand that same day, following the declaration and witnessing of the same Peter who had denied knowledge of Christ but fifty days earlier.

The famous English poet, William Blake, describes Pentecost in this way:

*“Unless the tongue catch fire  
The God will not be named  
Unless the heart catch fire  
The God will not be loved.  
Unless the mind catch fire  
The God will not be known.”*

*Romany White*

*Pentecost by Giotto (painted 1320 – 1325)*



Are YOU coming to Narro



# mine?

## Upcoming visit to Narromine – June long week-end

**S**itting at the study desk looking out the window, it is a quiet Easter Monday in Narromine. While reaching towards 34°, the sun is blocked by cloud and there is a gentle breeze blowing. In the park opposite, holiday caravaners are pulled up for lunch. The railway line across from the park is silent today, but there is normally a lot of activity, especially at harvest time. The concrete silos stare down onto both the park and our house.

We have been greeted with “Welcome home”, and some folk here refer to us as family. And this *is* our Narromine family. Alan had six services over 12 days during the Easter period; we have done a lot of visiting where we have been privileged to hear people’s stories, met with other minsters in the town over coffee or at a joint service, caught up with some of the town shopkeepers (in particular at Short’s butchers which is housed in a glorious heritage listed building), and been attending Food Barn. There have been many and varied Bible and sermon discussions.

We share with the congregation their highs and lows. Currently those growing cotton have just defoliated in readiness for picking over the next few weeks. They do not want rain just yet. However, those who are waiting to plant winter crops— oats, wheat, barley, canola— want rain. The ground is extremely dry and hard and much land within the Narromine Shire is among the 8.0% of the Central West that falls into the ‘drought’ category according to the new Enhanced Drought Indicator System (EDIS). Another 57.7% of the Central West is in the ‘drought onset’ category. The remaining 34.3% of the Central West zone is in the ‘watch’ category, with none of it described as ‘recovering’ or ‘non-drought’.

Yet paradoxically on Bootles Rd about a 15 minutes’ drive out of Narromine there is a Floodway sign and on the Dubbo Road there are flood indicators, up to 2 metres in height. The Narromine area is flat – and flood-prone – for as far as the eye can see; it is a land of harsh extremes and for me part of that extreme is evidenced by the Saltbush Nursery. Saltbush, if left uncontrolled is a weed, but in Narromine it is grown and used as fodder for stock, and kept under control by that grazing.

If you would like to experience the beauty, diversity and friendly country hospitality that Narromine offers, then ear-mark the June long weekend (8 – 11) to be part of the St Stephen’s visit to Narromine. Those who travel out are billeted with church families and an interesting and slightly different program to 2017 is being planned. Those who came last year had an unforgettable experience, and this year, with relationships now established, promises to be even better.

*Lauris Harper*

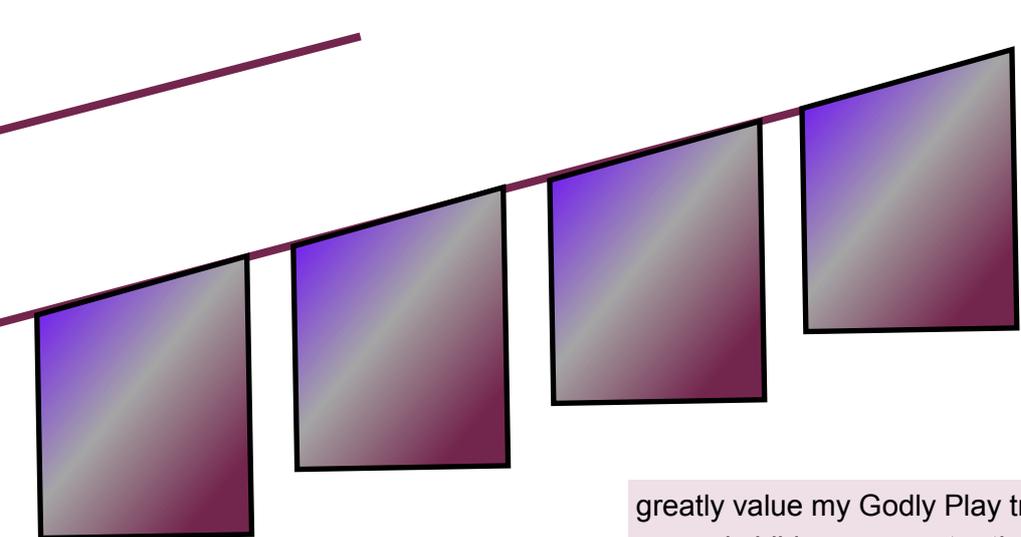
# Introducing our student Minister



For the past seven years I have been working as a Child and Family Worker for the Woollahra Double Bay Uniting Church. In that time I have helped run worship and preached sermons, but my main task was to start what is called a “Messy Church.” It’s called “messy” because it involves a lot of paint, a lot of food and a lot of games, but is still intent on containing the key ingredients of church rather than just being a kids’ club. We started this outreach with a Christmas event back in 2012 not knowing who would turn up. We were astonished when over sixty people turned up and things kicked off from there. Messy Church is still going well at Woollahra.

I have two degrees from Excelcia College (formerly known as the Wesley Institute). The first was in Creative Arts and the second in Theology. When I studied Creative Arts, I met my wife Marike who is from Germany. When she finished her degree, we were married in Germany and lived there for almost two years. While we were there, I worked in several capacities for churches and other Christian initiatives. We both lived above and worked in a youth café where we could engage with young people. A fond memory I have of that time was running “Open Mic” nights where some kids from the streets would perform rap music they had written themselves. It was a real blessing to meet so many wonderful people there, to experience a different

**T**hey say the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree and that’s certainly true for me. Growing up in Sydney’s inner west, the son of an ordained Uniting Church minister, as much as I’ve tried in the past to deviate my course, God has brought me full circle to become a candidate for Minister of the Word and indeed to work in ministry with my father (that’s not a reference to God, but my actual father). Becoming a candidate was something I suspected God wanted me to do from early childhood.



culture and to learn to speak a new language.

Upon returning to Australia, I recommenced my studies in Theology which I completed in 2010. After learning German, I found it easier to learn both Greek and Hebrew and I was drawn to Old Testament Biblical Studies particularly. After completing my degree I was still not sure how I would implement it workwise, but after a few years working at Woollahra, I was encouraged to do a "Period of Discernment" which led me toward becoming a candidate.

I love stories and I have always been keen on the stories of the Bible. A few years ago I was introduced to "Godly Play", which is a particular way to tell Bible Stories especially with children. I

greatly value my Godly Play training and through this I have witnessed children encounter the stories of the people of God in incredible ways. The meditative and creative aspects of Godly Play have become a core part of my own spiritual practice.

My wife and I still live in Woollahra with our two children, Noah 5 and Tamara 4. As a family we enjoy going to the park or the beach and being with family and friends. My son likes stories too, especially anything with super heroes. They both really love dancing, singing and drawing.

For the past month I have been blessed to be a part of St Stephen's as a Student Minister. I have been so kindly welcomed here it is already feeling a bit like home. I have tried to get around to as many events as I can and see all the different things that go on. The Sunday services have been meaningful and spiritual and the choir and the organ just sound majestic. I have most enjoyed getting to know people over morning tea.

I am looking forward to the year ahead with much enthusiasm and I want to thank you all for having me here and making me feel so welcome.

*Andrew Jago*

### **WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR COIN SCHRAPNEL??**

All that loose change rattling around in your pocket or purse can be a nuisance. Why not put it in a jar and bring it in six monthly to help the church fund small projects?



# PROFILES

Sheena Wiard

*Member of Church Council,  
Member of Property Group,  
Member of Church Choir,  
Volunteer for Friday Music Recitals*



**S**heena Wiard was born in the town of Stirling in Scotland, and she grew up in the nearby small town of Alloa, on the Firth of Forth. As an only child, Sheena was sometimes lonely but she enjoyed her childhood as well as her schooldays. She attended Sunday School at St Mungo's Parish Church in Alloa and has fond memories of the fun she and her family had at the annual Sunday School picnics. Later on, she enjoyed being part of the Bible Class (Youth Group) which had regular socials. Sheena participated in school and church choirs, did Scottish Country dancing and played several sports. At the age of 17, Sheena went off to university in Edinburgh and stopped attending church for several years. However, once she was gainfully employed, she re-joined the church and enjoyed singing in church choirs.

Music has always played a prominent role in Sheena's life; in fact, her parents told her many years later that they were extremely anxious when she disappeared from the family's front yard at about age 3. She had been following the local Salvation Army brass band around the neighbourhood, and Sheena's mother eventually found her several streets away, happily sitting on the kerb enjoying the music!

Sheena met her husband Jack on a group tour travelling in South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Sudan in 1974, when they were teaching in separate states in Australia. After corresponding for a year or two, Sheena moved to Sydney where Jack and she were married in a civil ceremony at the Bennelong Restaurant. They then travelled to Scotland for a blessing

ceremony at Sheena's childhood church. By the time their two daughters (Victoria and Susan) came along, Sheena and Jack were regularly attending St Stephen's. Both girls were baptised and attended Sunday School at our church, but have been resident in Brisbane for the past few years.

Sheena has always enjoyed the high standard of music at St Stephen's, both in the services and in the Friday Music program. The friendship and hospitality of the congregation are also a plus for her. In addition, Sheena finds it rewarding to belong to a church with such a lot of history behind it, and to see the way in which at St Stephen's, we are conserving and caring for such a significant building.

Sheena believes that we are fortunate to have such a wonderful city location, and is very pleased that we continue to make ourselves visible and available as a venue for meetings and concerts. She feels that we provide a quiet "oasis" for those passing along Macquarie Street. Sheena is optimistic about the future because, as she says, "We have an effective leadership structure in place which will help us face the challenges ahead, if we work together as God directs us".

*Janice Dawson*

*Christine Morling  
Secretary of Church Council,  
Finance Team Leader and  
Administration Team Leader*



Christine Morling's parents migrated to Australia from the Netherlands in 1954 with £5 in their pockets; her father subsequently trained as an accountant and her mother studied to become a podiatrist. Christine was born in Waverley and grew up in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney; Bondi Beach was a twenty-minute walk away and that was where Christine and her brother spent nearly all their free time. When Christine was ten years of age, she and her brother went over to Holland with their mother because their grandmother was dying. Christine's father had just started a new job so he was not able to accompany them. They were away for about three months in the depths of a particularly cold winter; as neither Christine nor her brother had never seen snow before, a white Christmas was a magical experience for them.

Christine attended Sunday School at the Rose Bay Methodist Church and she clearly remembers the enjoyable Sunday School picnics at Bobbin Head. Christine was in limbo for a few years after leaving Sunday School until at high school, a friend introduced her to the youth group at St Michael's Anglican Church in Vaucluse. It was there that Christine was confirmed, and she continued to worship at this church for around ten years.

Christine met her husband David on a blind date. That day, she had been involved in a near-fatal sailing accident and had nearly cancelled out of the evening. David and she later discovered how many people they knew in common, and were very surprised that they hadn't met previously. A few years later, David proposed when Christine was minding her aunt's house in Mosman. That aunt was Adriana, who was a faithful worshipper at St Stephen's over many

years, and whom many current members will remember with great affection. Christine and David have three sons, Martin, George and Edward. After the boys were born, the family all attended the Chatswood Baptist Church, where Christine taught Sunday School, ESL lessons and Computing for Seniors.

Christine has been worshipping at St Stephen's now for quite a number of years. She considers the different views presented during discussions stimulating and challenging, and has made a number of wonderful friends at our church. Christine's aunt Adriana saw St Stephen's as her spiritual home, and this has been a very important factor in Christine herself becoming very involved in the work of our church. Christine has been able to apply her computing, number and organisational skills to the projects and teams supporting St Stephen's, and this is proving to be a very rewarding experience for her.

In Christine's view, the most significant change has been the development of three year goals for Ministry and Worship at St Stephen's through workshops and consultation. Christine believes that "we have a Christ-focussed minister who is excited about St Stephen's and what it is possible to achieve in terms of outreach and mission, due to our beautiful building and location – as well as the faithful people of the congregation". She considers that the demographics, culture and vibe of the city of Sydney are changing rapidly, and that at St Stephen's, we have every chance of being part of this changing environment to offer a place where people are drawn to learn more about God's unconditional love for all his people.

*Janice Dawson*



# Music @ St Stephens

## From the Organ Bench

**T**he St Stephen's Choir resumed singing in late January after their well-earned summer break. Some choristers took the opportunity to go overseas for more study during the December/January holidays, while others sat in the regular pews during Sunday services. With Easter being early this year, the choir commenced rehearsing the Good Friday and Easter Day music in late February. This year, we presented Stainer's "Crucifixion" on Good Friday afternoon and we were so proud to be able to have Nathan and Geoffrey, our two male choral scholars, as the soloists again this year. The accompaniment was shared by myself and our wonderful organ scholar, Nico. Huw conducted the performance and we were fortunate enough to have a choir of over 50 voices with a number of outside choristers asking to join us as they have done in previous years.

On Easter Day, we were joined by the brass quintet and timpani who led us in the grand Easter hymns. As Easter fell on a communion Sunday this year, the brass joined us in the communion setting and brought the service to a rousing conclusion with Handel's immortal "Hallelujah Chorus", which has become something of an Easter Day tradition at St Stephen's.

It has been great to welcome our new alto scholar, Rebecca Hart, and we have already been blessed with who solo and duet singing over Easter.

Our next choral project will be preparing for our annual Choral Matins service which will be held on Pentecost Sunday.

The Music and Cultural Foundation has approved some more restoration work on the organ. The next stage will

go towards completing the re-leathering of the organ and repairing more damage from when the roof leaked.

Friday Music resumed in February and we have had excellent sized audiences ranging from about 50-75 each week. Unfortunately work at 60 Martin Place does sometimes impact on our performances which is regrettable but unavoidable for the moment. We look forward to the time when lunchtime audiences will again be able to enjoy Friday music, undisturbed by outside noise.

*Mark Quarmbay, Director of Music*

## St Stephen's Music and Cultural Foundation commits \$15,000 to organ repairs

The members of the Music and Cultural Foundation are pleased to announce that repairs to two key organ chests are to be carried out after Easter. Our organist Mark Quarmbay is delighted. Mark tells us that at the moment, on one chest a note sticks 90% of the time, while many notes on the second chest are dead. Mark looks forward keenly to the completion of these important repairs to our beautiful organ.

Funding is possible thanks to our generous donors. I would like to remind members and friends of St Stephen's that donations to our Foundation are tax deductible.

*Bill Roberts*

*Treasurer – St Stephen's Sydney Music and Cultural Foundation*

# Vale

Cecily Wharton was born on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1919 in Manilla, near Tamworth in New South Wales, the eldest of three children. Cecily's father, Alban Avis, was a teacher and headmaster, and he, his wife Emma and their family travelled around the state, where he taught at various schools. During this time, Alan, Cecily's younger brother, became good friends with Harry Wharton, and the two families grew close. This was how Cecily met Les Wharton, and the pair fell in love. They became engaged just before World War II, and Les enlisted with the 2<sup>nd</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> battalion. He was captured by the Japanese, and spent three and a half years as a POW.

Cecily had decided to become a teacher and she trained at the Sydney Teachers' College. It was during this time that her association with St Stephen's Presbyterian, later Uniting Church began, and her close involvement with the life of our church was to last 70 years. Cecily became an infants' teacher and taught at a number of schools in New South Wales, including Kyogle near Lismore and Lithgow in the central west. Eventually the war ended in 1945, and Les returned home by sea from Singapore to be reunited with his beloved Cecily. They married in November 1945 at St Stephen's, and three years later, they bought a block of land at Castlecrag. There they built a two-storey house which became home to their two children, Anne and Tim.

After teaching in several suburbs of Sydney, Cecily found a position at Willoughby Infants, where she taught for 18 years until her retirement. She was offered promotions to move to other schools, but she loved Willoughby, where she made many wonderful friends. Cecily was an outstanding teacher, patient and kind yet firm. She was also a very modest lady who did not regard herself as a special person – yet she was indeed special to a great number of people, and not just her family and friends. On many occasions when Cecily was out shopping in Castlecrag, people would come up to her full of praise, saying she had taught



them or their children. Cecily was a devoted wife to Les, supporting him in every way. In addition, she helped Anne and Tim pursue their dreams and careers; she was there in good times and bad, always with a wise word and plenty of love.

Just before Cecily retired, she was struck by a car while crossing the Eastern Valley Way. She was taken to the Mater Hospital at Crows Nest where she was treated for foot and leg injuries. She was so grateful to the nuns and medical staff there that she decided to be a volunteer; she did that for 30 years, and was recognised for all her years of dedication by the hospital.

Cecily has been a dearly loved wife to Les, and a treasured mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother. She will be greatly missed by all the members of her close family and by her circle of friends. In addition, Cecily was a committed and faithful member of St Stephen's over many years, and members of our congregation remember her graciousness, her dignity and her kindness to all. We mourn her loss, and extend our sincere condolences to all her family and friends.

*Janice Dawson*

# SERVICES

SUNDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
10:00 am Worship	1:00 pm Reflection, prayer, scripture	8:00am communion



## FRIDAY MUSIC:

Every Friday 1:10 pm—1:50 pm

Entry by donation. Full program details available at  
<http://www.ssms.org.au>

## Property News

As we approach the winter season with its promise of heavy rain storms, Property Team members are feeling very relieved that our church building is now watertight – at least as far as the roof is concerned. Gutters and flashing all along the northern and southern facades had been failing over several years and needed to be replaced. Fortunately we were awarded a grant of \$150,000 by the NSW state government through the Office of Environment and Heritage to carry out repairs and conservation work which was planned throughout 2017 and completed last November. We trust the new copper gutters and lead flashings will perform well and protect the church into the future.



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