

# St Stephen's Uniting Church in the city

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



# VISION

Autumn 2019



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# EDITORIAL

**T**he period of Lent has begun and we are now preparing for the holy time of Easter, when we commemorate the Crucifixion of our Lord. The sadness and pain we will feel on Good Friday will be replaced on Easter Sunday by the joy of the Resurrection and the opportunity to experience again the inner peace which comes with new beginnings. We have chosen *Renewal* as the theme of this Autumn 2019 issue, and readers will find much in it to invite reflection; our hope is that you find inspiration in the articles written by members of our Sunday and Tuesday congregations. The contributions to this issue include two poems which are a most welcome addition.

The congregation was very pleased to welcome back our Director of Music and organist, Mark Quarmby, as well as our Choirmaster, Huw Belling, and the members of the choir after the summer break. The beautiful music they offer us each Sunday is an integral part of our worship and is a source of inspiration and pleasure to all who attend, whether they be regular worshipers or visitors. As we go to press, Mark, Huw and the choir are busy preparing the sacred music which will be performed during the Easter services; they are also rehearsing for the presentation of *Olivet to Calvary* at 2.30 pm on Good Friday.

Friday music continues to be well attended, and regulars as well as visitors appreciate listening to a range of performers in the beautiful venue of our worship space. Jazz and Gospel Nights are generally attracting bigger audiences as people from a variety of backgrounds and of different ages come in to enjoy the relaxing music on offer and to make new friends. Our Tertiary Students Worker, Kathryn Lynch, has written a great article for us on *Jazz Behind the Green Door* to mark the first anniversary of this successful initiative to reach out to the wider community. Our Organ Scholar, Nico Tjoelker, has very recently returned from his time studying and travelling overseas, and everyone I am sure will be very interested to read more about his exciting experiences during the months he spent in Europe.

Members and friends of St Stephen's are enjoying a range of social activities this year, organised by Judith Barton and Margaret De La Garde. Readers will find in this issue an interesting article on the first such activity, a visit to the Jewish Museum, and a second article advertising the next activity, namely a day visiting the Southern Highlands on a heritage train. Reading is also a favourite activity for a number of members of the St Stephen's family, and this edition of *Vision* contains two book reviews which I am sure will be of interest.

Alan and Lauris Harper are already planning for the second visit of members of our sister congregation at the Narromine Uniting Church, which will take place on the long week-end of the 31<sup>st</sup> May to the 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Some St Stephen's members will host our friends from Narromine, and there are planned activities for the Saturday as well as a luncheon at the church on the Sunday. This will be a great opportunity for our congregation to repay the wonderful hospitality shown to members of the St Stephen's congregation during our visit to Narromine last year.

Kathryn Lynch sent out a request to members at St Stephen's in the days prior to Welcome Day at the Conservatorium of Music, asking for donations of slices and other finger food items to offer to new students who might be interested in joining Christian Students Uniting. All those members of our church who supported Kathryn will be interested to read in her article that their efforts were not in vain. The CSU stand with its appealing treats attracted new students interested in joining Bible studies run by Ken and Kathryn, as well as other activities which will be organised by the group throughout the university year.

Finally, members and friends will find in this Autumn issue the profile of a valued member of our church community, Sue Day. In this article, we find out some interesting details about Sue's life before she became a member of our church family. Sue talks also about her involvement at St Stephen's, and gives her opinion on the future of our church.

Hopefully there will be something of interest for everybody in this current edition!

*Janice Dawson*

# THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

## AN EASTER POEM

*They stood at the foot of the cross, to see  
The pain, the anguish, the agony.*

Stand at the foot of the cross, today.  
See the pain in a mother's eyes and heart.  
See the anguished cries of lives torn apart.  
See the agony of torture and pain  
The world inflicts.

*They stood at the foot of the cross, to see  
Life drain away, oh such misery.*

Stand at the foot of the cross, today  
See life slip away from the starving child  
See the bruised and battered, maimed and defiled  
See the scattered limbs in the war-torn lands;  
The world looks on

*They stood at the foot of the cross, to see  
One last plea for life, for clemency.*

Stand at the foot of the cross, today  
See the outstretched hands from the sinking boat  
See the withered feet at the beggar's bowl  
See arms clutched at bars of a prison cell;  
Victims of war

*They stood at the foot of the cross, to see  
Head bowed in death, the blood running free*

Stand at the foot of the cross, today  
His words might echo in just the same way  
"Forgive them" he said "for what's done to me  
For they know not yet that I come from Thee";  
To save the world

*They stood at the front of the tomb, to see  
In the light of dawn, a man set free*

Stand at the front of the tomb, today  
Scatter your light from our fortunate land  
Help roll back the stone and put out your hand  
For cross and tomb are our weapons of war;  
In Christ's name

**Jennet Cunnington**

Originally written for 'devotions' Moss Vale UC 15/03/2012





**O**ne of the fastest growing areas of elective surgery in the western world is cosmetic surgery. Plastic surgeons will reshape your face, “iron out” your wrinkles, enhance or reduce your breasts, alter your nose, nip and tuck, or do any combination of dozens of interventions on offer – all at a considerable price. Of course, sometimes such surgery is essential, and it is a true blessing that people disfigured by illness or accident can have their appearance and their dignity restored. But much of what occupies the professionals and the resources involved is truly elective, the expression of a desire to look “better”, or more often, to appear younger.

If I sound sceptical about this trend, it’s because I am. Not only does it concern me that so many valuable resources can be devoted to people’s vanity, but I wonder if those who invest in a younger appearance have really thought through the consequences. If you *look* younger, then people can justifiably expect you to *act* younger, to be able to do the things that younger bodies should be able to do. No matter what you may have done to the exterior, nothing has altered the interior. You’re still living in a body that’s been around since the day you were born. You may look renewed, but there has been no renewal.

Our inherent desire for renewal largely lies behind

the strategy of the advertising industry in our consumer economy. From the “new you” that will result from some diet factory, or from a new clothing label, or from a new cosmetic brand, to the renewal of happiness and contentment which is promised with the purchase of a new car, or a new piece of furniture, or a new mobile phone, we are swamped with promises of the renewal which can be had for the mere price of the article in question.

And we never seem to learn. That garden setting, which was sold with images of happy, relaxed family fun centred on it in an idyllic backyard, arrived, was positioned in our own less-than-perfect yard, and sat there unused – because we forgot that purchasing the item didn’t include the time to use it. It’s just a nuisance to move every time we mow the lawn!

Probably the commodity which most clearly brings this point home is from the holiday and travel industry. Our whole life will be changed, we’re told, by our visit to one of the exotic locations on offer, and we will return renewed, refreshed, rejuvenated, with a new outlook on life. But we forget that the one item we can’t avoid packing with our luggage – no matter how light we try to travel – is *ourselves*. We cannot escape ourselves. We carry with our physical baggage all the other mental baggage that has accrued over our lifetime. We cannot leave it behind. And it’s not nearly as susceptible to renewal by temporary relocation as we hope.

Jesus had some things to say in this sphere. He recognised that real change must occur inside a person,



and that it could not be brought about by cosmetics or by manipulation of exterior things. “What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them,” he told his followers (Mt 15:11); thus, if you are to be cleansed, the change must occur inside, and no amount of scrubbing on the outside will have any effect. It’s hardly too long a bow to draw to substitute “renewed” for “cleansed.”

**More directly, Jesus told Nicodemus, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit..... You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’” (Jn 3:5-7)**

While the notion of being “born again” has a wide spectrum of interpretations, and has unfortunately been hijacked as a quasi-political label in the United States, it is very clear that Jesus is talking about deep-seated change within a person, brought about by the action in their life of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing superficial about it.

Such renewal of individuals can bear great fruit. Think of the incredible legacy left by the apostle Paul, whose dramatic renewal on the road to Damascus, and subsequently in that city, led to a complete metamorphosis in his life, and to a powerful ministry across much of the eastern Roman Empire. Think of the renewal of John Newton, a slave-trader whose Christian conversion (being born again, if you like)

led to his entry into the Anglican clergy, to his championing the abolition of slavery – and to one of our most beloved hymns, “Amazing Grace.” Think of John Wesley, whose “evangelical conversion” in 1738, when he said that he felt his “heart strangely warmed”, saw a powerful revivalist ministry which led, eventually, to the formation of the great Methodist Church, its powerful ministry across the world, and its extraordinary missionary activity, of which we particularly, here in Australia, still reap the fruit. Think of Mother Teresa, whose resolve to become a missionary grew to determination during a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Black Madonna of Vitina-Letnice in 1928.

There are countless examples, from every century and every nation, many of them mostly unknown, but all the work of the Spirit, alive and restless and active in our world. Renewal can come to individuals, to congregations, to whole denominations, even to whole nations. Renewal is often not easy – true renewal, God’s renewal, is counter-cultural. Renewal must be treasured and safeguarded and not allowed to slip away as inertia and old habits seek to defend their turf.

But true renewal – God’s renewal – delivers on the promises that so elude the shallow and cosmetic renewals offered by this world. In God’s kingdom, we may, probably will, look just the same on the outside, but we shall have been renewed on the inside, where it counts. For God’s promise of renewal is no less than the promise of life, life in the Spirit, salvation from a world enchanted by ephemeral superficialities and beholden to the false gods of consumerism, materialism and egoism. Only in Jesus Christ is true renewal to be found.

*Alan Harper OAM*



## Renewal - Inspired by the Lent Event Project This Year

**T**he quote by Nelson Mandela - *I learned that courage is not the absence of fear but the triumph over it* - heads the first page of the Lent Event fact booklet on Timor Leste, where funds raised will provide aid and hope this year.

Timor Leste is a nation that won independence in 2002 at a high price, when a third of the population starved or was massacred. More than half the population still live on less than \$2 a day, communities remain without running water and electricity and diseases like TB continue to exact a toll.

Rev. Albino, who came close to losing his life during the Occupation, now heads the social services agency of the Protestant Church of Timor Leste. His aim is to renew the faith and strengthen the resilience of his people by promoting forgiveness and working to overcome poverty. It is in partnering with inspiring characters like Rev. Albino this Lent with prayerful and financial support that we too can assist the people of Timor Leste on their path to renewal and hope for a better future.

**Romany White**

***When the day of.....as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2: 1-4.***

**T**his powerful event has propelled the Christian Church forward for 2000 years. But where are we now?

In the last Australian Census, 61% responded as Christians. So substantially more than half of us Australians say we are adherents of Jesus Christ and accept the risen Christ, the Son of God, as our saviour.

No. A strong proportion is "progressive". What does that mean? Anything you want it to apparently. My school friend John, an Anglican all his life, has been studying this theme for 26 years. He doesn't believe either of these two which are givens for me and most of my fellow Christians. Marcus Borg the eminent progressive believes in God. My friend John isn't sure.

For those of us now labelled "orthodox", there are two contracts between God and man which speak to Renewal: the Old Covenant and the New.

In simple terms, the Old Covenant was based on the two tablets God gave to Moses on Mt Sinai (actually four tablets, good quiz question). When Moses came down and saw the golden calf, he was so

cross he smashed the two tablets and had to go back for replacements. It didn't take long for the chosen people to break the Covenant by not following the commandments. So a thousand years later, God sent his only son with a New Covenant. Again, in simple terms: believe in me and you shall have eternal life. We see how this played out in Paul's letters, such as to the Corinthians. They were confused: the Jews at being asked to adopt a new tradition after a thousand years of following another; the Gentiles at being given different instructions by different people over whether they needed to be circumcised. It didn't help that other speakers were coming from Jerusalem saying Paul only had part of the story and (for a suitable reward) they would give them the real story.

So what does this say to us two thousand years later? It says that renewal is great and glorious, that Christ's conquering of death is the most important event since creation. But it also says that the path is difficult and sometimes treacherous. God's gift of Grace is given freely but that doesn't mean we can just sit back and accept it. However we respond to this individually, it is well to remember James's statement "Faith without works is dead".

And at Easter we have once again the opportunity to reflect on this greatest of all God's gifts.

Pistos ho kalon (the one who calls you is faithful).

***David Grentorex***



*(Official Lent Event photo)*

*At last, we all like autumn leaves fall down,  
though first, their reds and yellows bring delight,  
briefly redeem, half naturalise this town,  
soothe stomachs, soften and deflect some blight.*

*Along the curving roads, abut, across  
the lake, oak, willow, poplar, golden birch :  
our loss becomes their gain but here their loss  
my benefit as they become my church.*

*Far northern and far desert trees have place -  
with redwood, waddy wood – all threatened ilk,  
and gum's unleaving, disembarking face,  
in summer – jacaranda, persian silk :  
but best renewed in eastertide I see  
my artful God incarnate in a tree.*

*autumn in the south*

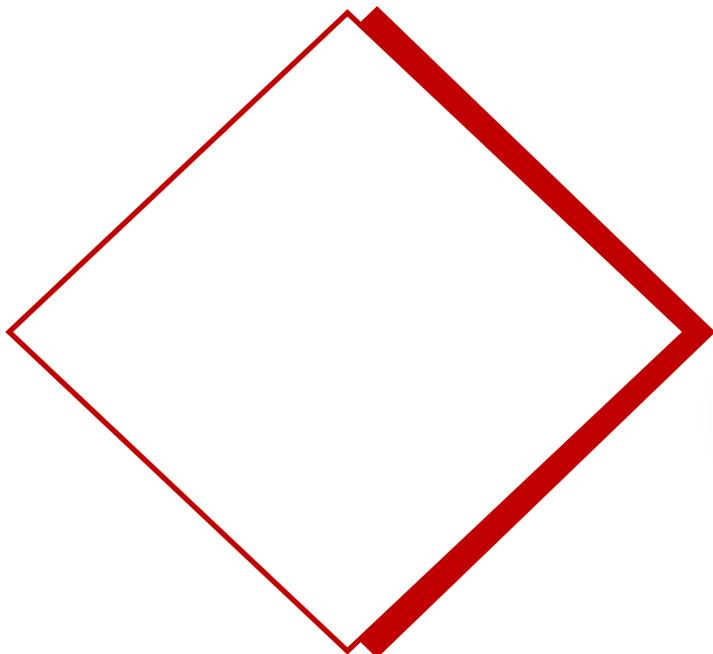
**T**his is a re-written sonnet included in a collection of 60 or more poems, *God in the Golden Evening*, many of them in earlier books also now revised, with new poems added. This one I hope has been made a bit clearer.

I have never before tried to explain a poem's meaning, and once words are written, others may see in the words what one did not see oneself.

However, this time, I do add my interpretation. Others may read it differently. It was inspired by Canberra's autumn beauty. That city seems to have more and more rather ugly buildings, but during that season this blight is "deflected" and it is half compensated for, softened, hidden, by the autumn colours – the town "half naturalised". Otherwise, some of these edifices churn one's stomach, their lack of grace and balance even more evident when the leaves are gone. (There are exceptions !)

The autumn trees stand alongside Canberra's curving roads (and in the parklands) and abut the lake, or are seen across it. (I am fortunate to have some such trees about my own house - claret ash, liquid amber, and an ornamental peach - although also bottle brush, jacaranda, albizia (Persian silk), and frangipani, and behind the boundary an ancient willow on the creek that will run when the rain next arrives.)



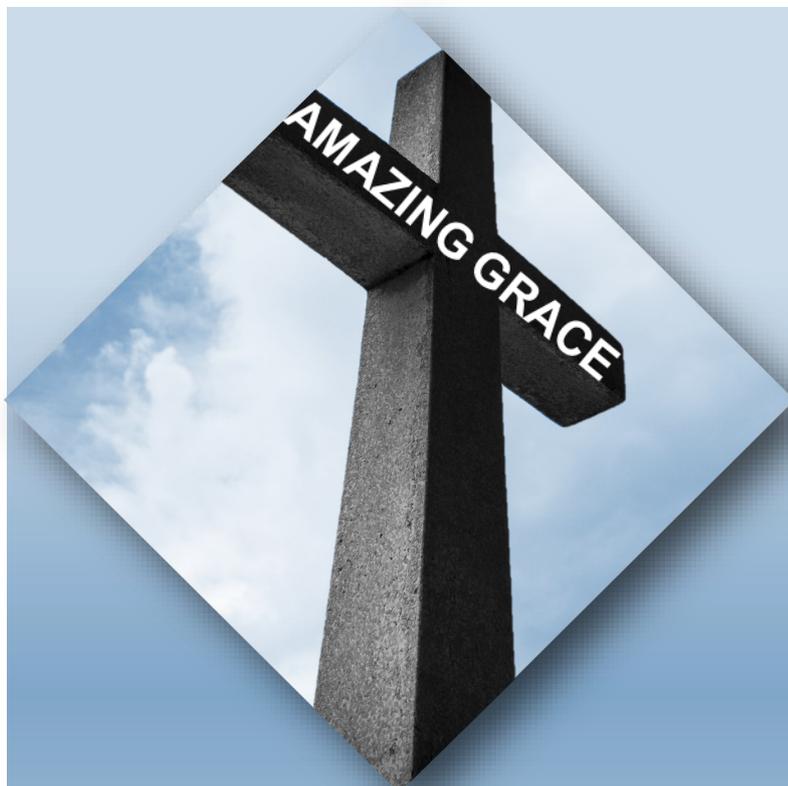


And in some places trees and life can be nourished if we ourselves are buried in the earth. "Our loss becomes their gain". Very much so in the United Kingdom where there is a growing number of woodland places, where burials may take place under the grass and trees, without headstones but with a simple record of names on a wall. To me, more fitting than the columbariums and cemeteries that have long since replaced most of the churches' graveyards.

In the meantime, "here", while I am still alive, the leaves' changing colouring and their beauty and their loss, their drifting to the earth, make them for a time "my church", and among these trees I can worship.

The threatened redwood of the north, the waddy wood of Australia's interior, and other threatened trees, others of their "ilk", have their place, and likewise eucalypts in their own indigenous seasons, with their leaves that disembark, and the beautiful trees of our summer such as the jacaranda and the persian silk; but for me no season can better the autumn blaze. And I have seen my God in an autumn tree, the experience triggering this poem, just as some will see God in the fruitful tree of the Cross, fruitful in the renewal that it brings after the dry Egyptian heat of our summer days.

*Rev John Bunyan*



**E**phesians 2:8-9: *For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.*

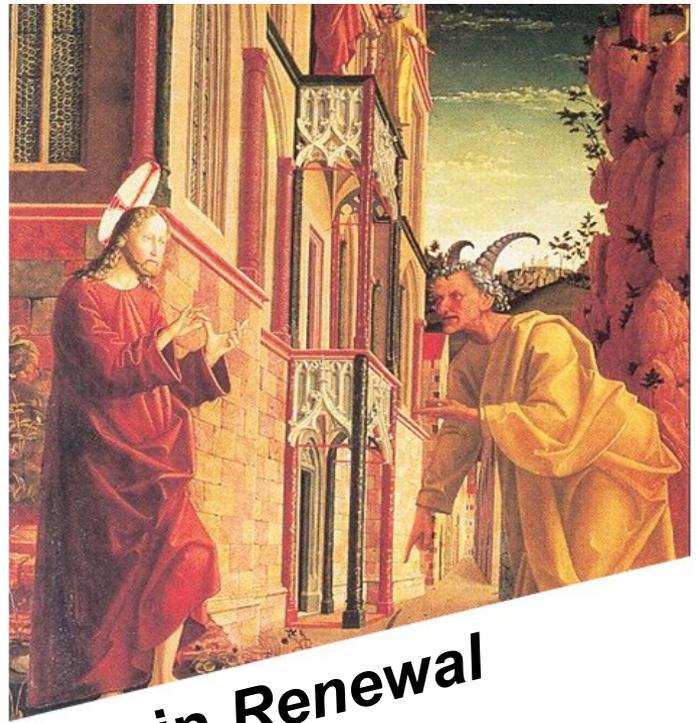
I grew up in a Christian home, learning about the love of God from my mother and grandparents, Church and community.

However, thinking about renewal is such a reminder of God's great love for us, that even when we were dead, Christ made us alive in Him. We have been raised and seated with Christ in heaven and all of this comes by His Grace that we receive through faith.

It is also a good reminder that our 'good works' don't give us entry into God's Kingdom, but rather that through the resurrection of Jesus, we are able to claim the glory and promises of God, as well as own our need for His grace and provision; and move on to our new standing before God, both as individuals and, corporately, as a family of believers.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound!

*Judith Barton.*



## Putting the New in Renewal

I love Lent. It's my favourite season in the Christian calendar because every year, without fail, I am struck in a new way by the gravity of what we remember at Good Friday and the victory of what we celebrate on Easter Sunday. And every Lent I am reminded of the need to break out of bad habits and take up new disciplines; to shed the old and too comfortable patterns of life which are so subtly harmful to our relationship with God and to put on a new attitude, with a refreshed commitment to walk hand in hand with our Saviour.

But if there's one thing I'm resistant to, it's change. And I don't think I'm alone in this. Often, something new seems less of an opportunity and more of an uncertainty, and change is less to be excited about and more to be terrified of. The challenge is to not only to recognise the need for renewal but to accept that this might mean doing something new. And to trust that the God who was, who is and who is to come will guide your way, walking hand in hand with you down unfamiliar paths.

I recently started attending the Tuesday lunchtime service at St Stephen's. I work long hours in a building around the corner from the church and haven't been able to get to

night time mid-week Bible studies at my home church in the south of Sydney. The obvious solution was to find something closer to work. And about as close as you can get was St Stephen's. But it took quite a while for me to build up the courage to just walk in one Tuesday, not knowing anyone, and open myself up to all the possibilities of a new experience.

It has been such a blessing! I felt so welcomed from the moment I stepped in the doors, already part of this community so willing to welcome the new person. We passed the peace, heard from the Word and shared communion. Such simple and familiar actions which were made new for me. God has been doing something in my heart this year and has been showing me that while He can renew us in any situation, even in the mundane or stagnant parts of our lives, sometimes the way He chooses to renew us is by taking us into something new.

The following parable, based on Luke's description of the tempting of Jesus, is a reflection of my prayer for the year: that I will be brave to walk new paths with my God, reminded by the scriptures that He has never failed us and He won't start now.



*The young woman, praying to be full of the Holy Spirit, left university and was led into the workplace, where for three years she was tempted by the devil.*

*The devil said to her, "I really don't think you should start something new right now. It's a risk. You don't know where it could lead. You'll be alone, a target. And it's not part of your plan. It probably won't do you any good anyway." The young woman answered, "It is written:<sup>1</sup> 'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' And it is written:<sup>2</sup> 'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"*

*The devil led her up to a high place where she could see all the busyness of her life, and he said to her, "You've got enough on your plate. You're tired. Why would you bother with church or prayer or the Bible or acts of service when you hardly have the energy for Netflix? It's a lot of effort, this whole Christian thing. There's no fun in it."*

*"I'm not even sure you've got it in you." The young woman answered, "It is written:<sup>3</sup> 'He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.'"*

*Then the devil took her to a crowded place, and he said to her, "Look at them all. Don't you want to be like them? For them to like you? Stick with your old habits. Don't think too hard about anything. You're doing ok, anyway. You're not as bad as that guy!" The young woman answered, "It is written:<sup>4</sup> 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.' And it is written:<sup>5</sup> 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!'"*

*When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left her until an opportune time.*

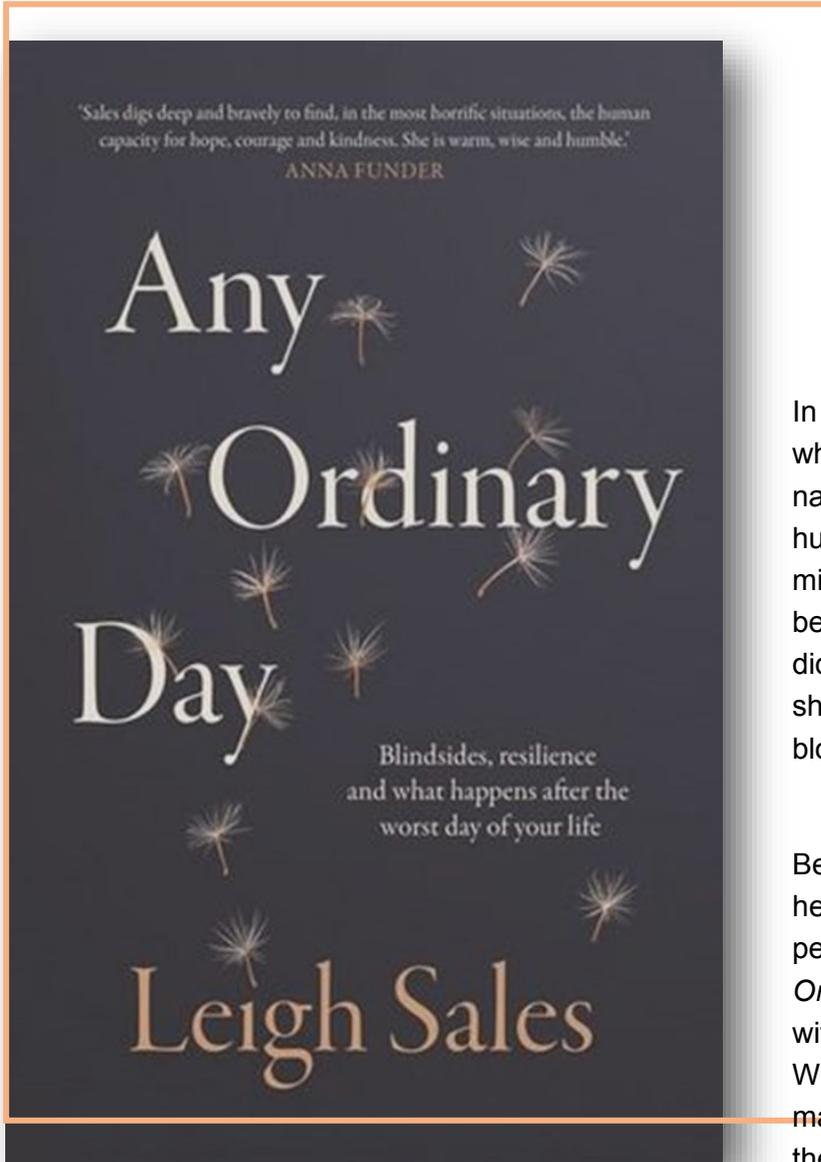
<sup>1</sup> Joshua 1:9

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 29:11

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 40: 29-31

<sup>4</sup> Romans 12:2

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17



# Book

In this inspiring book, Leigh Sales talks with people who have faced incredible tragedy, from terrorism to natural disaster. She finds hope, courage and even humour in the way they share their stories, when she might have thought that she would find lives broken beyond repair. At the same time, Leigh offers a candid account of her own experiences and reveals what she has learned about coping with life's unexpected blows.

Before beginning to write this book, Leigh had behind her years of experience interviewing different kinds of people, most of whom had a high profile. In *Any Ordinary Day*, she conducts a series of interviews with victims of extraordinarily tragic events, including Walter Mikac (who lost his family in the Port Arthur massacre) and Stuart Diver (whose wife perished in the Thredbo landslide). "A day that turns a life upside-down usually starts like any other", she says at the beginning of her book. But when an ordinary day is suddenly overcome by darkness, how those people involved deal with tragedy varies. Some people turn to their religious faith for support and strength, whilst others adopt a different approach and find the courage to move forward, often thanks to the kindness and empathy of fellow human beings.

In *Any Ordinary Day*, Leigh Sales seeks answers to very difficult questions including the following:

***Is it possible that something positive and meaningful can come out of the worst experience of your life? Why are some people more capable than others of surviving and finding meaning or a purpose following an unexpected tragedy?***

**H**ave you ever wondered just how people who are hit by a sudden and unexpected tragedy in their lives cope? And how they then find the strength afterwards to pick up the pieces and face life again with courage and hope?

These are the questions which motivated Leigh Sales to write her third and most personal book so far – *Any Ordinary Day*. Leigh has experienced first hand how a series of shocks can turn one's own previously happy life upside down. When Leigh was eight months pregnant with her second child, she suffered a uterine rupture and came very close to death. This difficult time was followed soon afterwards by the discovery of a worrying health problem experienced by her two year old son – and then came the pain of divorce.

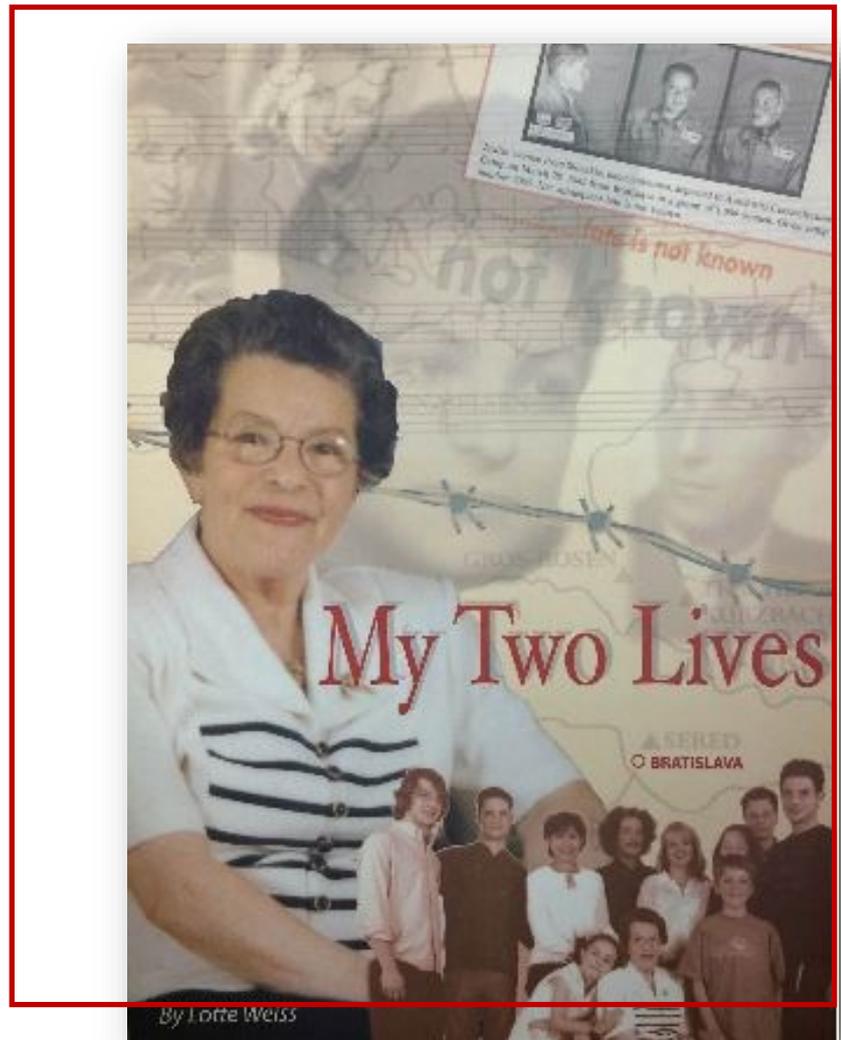
# Reviews

At the same time, it seems clear that writing this book brought healing for the author. Leigh Sales is always honest with us and she does not pretend to have easy answers to the unexpected tragedies of life.

There are many inspiring people in *Any Ordinary Day*; the generous and courageous way in which they share their pain and distress as well as their insights form the basis of this book. The wisdom and honesty of those interviewed will stay with the reader long after the last page has been turned; he or she will be reminded of the fragility of life as well as the extraordinary capacity of the human soul to overcome tragedy and to move forward.

One such person is the author Hannah Richell, whose husband died in a surfing accident; she says to Leigh Sales at one point in the book, *"I understand now that happiness isn't some goal that we're working towards... I just find peace and beauty in the smallest moments. I find myself feeling less afraid of life... It's as if surviving the hardest thing – the greatest pain – frees me to live more courageously."* Each story in this book reminds the reader that although grief and loss are an inevitable part of life, when faced by unexpected tragedy, we are all generally capable of demonstrating a surprising degree of resilience.

*Janice Dawson*



Lotte Weiss is a survivor of Auschwitz, and gives the reader a glimpse into the Holocaust; she describes life in a concentration camp and how she reclaimed her life afterwards.

Lotte is an amazing woman with a profound belief in miracles, and gratitude to the Almighty for giving her back her life. She remains a person of hope, and shares her story generously so that people can learn to live in peace and harmony with each other. Lotte Weiss's objective in writing this book is also to promote the tolerance and respect which people should show towards each other, across the universe.

*Judith Barton*

*If you are interested in reading this book, please contact Judith Barton 0413 786 571, or write your name down on the notice board, near Ken's Office.*



# THE JEWISH MUSEUM

The Jewish Museum is housed in the historic Maccabean Hall, located at 148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst, and built to commemorate Jewish men and women from New South Wales who served in World War I. This NSW Jewish War Memorial, formally opened by Sir John Monash on Armistice Day 1923, has long been a hub of Jewish life in Sydney, and was judged an appropriate site for the Sydney Jewish Museum. It is dedicated to preserving, documenting and teaching the history of the Holocaust, the systematic persecution and slaughter of Jews by the Nazis, and a genocide of such proportion that it is difficult to comprehend even decades later. In addition, the Museum illustrates the richness of Jewish life and traditions in Australian society.

Our visit started off sharing a delicious lunch at the Kosher Café. We were then invited to reflect, discover and explore! Our tour guide began with the Holocaust Exhibition, located over three levels, which traces the persecution and murder of European Jewry from 1933 to 1945, and explores the contemporary and on-going resonance of these horrific events. The exhibition also recounts the new lives forged by survivors following their arrival in Australia, and their contribution to the rich, multicultural fabric of contemporary Australia life.

Particularly harrowing and heartbreaking, at least for me, was walking through the Children's Memorial. *Keep their voice alive* commemorates the 1.5 million children who were murdered during the Holocaust. The Memorial sits in a small room in the Holocaust Exhibition space and contains a wall of tiled photos and names of children; there is an accompanying digital display of the same

names and photographs. It provides a somber place of reflection. Since the opening of the Children's Memorial, 432 names and photographs have been collected from the Sydney community. Included in the memorial space is a sculpture of children's shoes by Israeli sculptress Elza Pollak. *All that Remained* is a loving tribute to those who left no trace.

It was indeed a challenging and confronting experience, discovering, exploring and reflecting on the Sydney Jewish Museum.

*Judith Barton*





# PROFILE

## **Sue Day** *Volunteer at St Stephen's on Sundays and at the Wednesday Gospel and Jazz Nights*

**S**ue Day was born in Middlesbrough in Yorkshire, the elder of identical twin girls by ten minutes. Sue and Julie were nearly three years old when their parents moved to Australia where the family settled initially in the migrant hostel at East Hills. Sue's father quickly found a job at a factory in Kingsgrove, whilst her mother went to work at the Ceylon Tea Centre in the city.

Sue received her primary school education at the Mount Pritchard Public School, and then went on to secondary studies at the Busby High School near Liverpool. When it came time for vocational training, Sue applied to do one of the new pre-apprenticeship courses in hairdressing being offered at that time at the Granville TAFE. Out of a significant number of applicants, Sue was one of only thirty to be accepted for this new vocational training scheme which was a government initiative. Sue then continued her apprenticeship in hairdressing at a salon in Campsie. At the age of 19, she met Ken in the simplest possible way when he came in to have a haircut. Ken was a primary school teacher at that time at Canterbury Public School. By the time that Ken and Sue married two years later, Ken had already begun to study Theology part-time whilst still working as a teacher.

At the time of their marriage, Sue knew that Ken felt called to the Ministry and she supported him in that decision. Sue herself was a practising Catholic and she discovered the teachings of the Uniting Church over a period of time. She approached what was then a new Church with no pre-conceived ideas and

no bias. The Uniting Church did not expect Sue to give up her Catholic heritage and she became a Member-in-Association of the UCA.

Three years after their marriage, Lauren was born; and whilst Ken was Minister of the Word at Kogarah Uniting Church, J'aime and Eden came into the world. Sue is now a very proud grandmother who enjoys very much looking after her three grandchildren when time permits.

Sue feels very much a part of the church family at St Stephen's. She enjoys talking with members and friends over morning tea after the 10am Sunday service, and helping out when needed, usually behind the scenes. Regulars at our church are in no doubt that Sue is a great source of strength and a wonderful support to Ken in his very demanding and sometimes difficult role as our Minister of the Word. Over recent months, Sue has been a regular helper and worker at our monthly Gospel and Jazz Nights, held on the second Wednesday of each month.

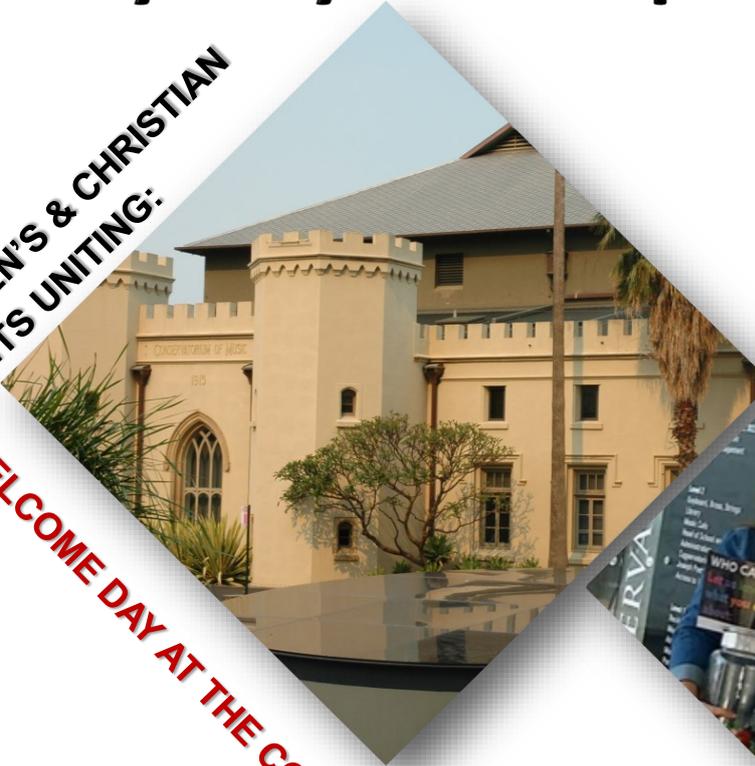
When questioned about how she sees the future of St Stephen's, Sue firstly says that she looks back on our journey as a church over the last few years since Ken's ministry began and she sees a lot of positives, because she feels that we are coming together as a community. Each of us is on our own spiritual journey, yet we share a common goal – to make Jesus known and share our own personal faith in him. St Stephen's is thus becoming more "user friendly" to the people of Sydney – a place where people feel free to come and where a warm welcome awaits them. Sue's final comment relates to the fact that our church is so well located, ensuring that new people come through our doors. Some are visiting Sydney for a short period of time; others drop in for a while and then decide to stay. With some new initiatives in place, Sue's firm belief is that we can look forward to the future with confidence.

*Janice Dawson*

# Kathryn Lynch reports on . . .

ST STEPHEN'S & CHRISTIAN  
STUDENTS UNITING:

WELCOME DAY AT THE CON



**C**hristian Students Uniting celebrated Welcome Day at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music at the end of February.

Welcome Day is the rebranded O Day – Orientation Day – where new students on their first day at the Con attend inaugural lectures, have guided tours, and learn about university life. University might be a dull place if it was only about the academic activities; students at Sydney University, which includes the Con, are able to participate in any number of student clubs and societies, from sporting clubs, to cultural clubs, and religious groups.

Christian Students Uniting is the Uniting Church on campus at universities across Sydney, Newcastle, Canberra and Wollongong. It provides young adults from the Uniting Church a chance to meet on campus for Bible studies, social activities, mentoring and more.

Christian Students Uniting at the Sydney Con is led by St Stephen's Mission Worker Kathryn Lynch, Rev Ken Day and students Nico Tjoelker and Gabby Cadenhead. Welcome Day was an opportunity for them to meet new students, and promote activities happening at the Con and at St Stephen's – as well as hand out slices of the delicious baked goodies made by the congregation of St Stephen's.

During this semester, Kathryn and Ken will be leading weekly Bible studies exploring the Biblical themes and characters that students encounter in the musical works they are studying. Helping students see how their faith can give meaning to their musical study and performance, and ensuring that the Christian faith is a vital part of their lives, is a focus of the work of Christian Students Uniting.

As Gabby says, "Bringing together my skills as a writer and composer alongside my faith makes for more cohesive art making which reflects my vocation. The road of discipleship is one that I will travel for the rest of my life, and I feel equipped to process and express every step through words and music."

## Jazz Behind the Green Door celebrates its first anniversary!

**J**azz Behind the Green Door is exactly what it says – jazz music at St Stephen's in the city, behind the green door on Macquarie Street. Once a month, on the second Wednesday, the Ferguson Hall is transformed into a pop-up jazz club. Jazz musicians, most of whom are students or recent graduates of the Conservatorium of Music, delight the audience who live and work in the city or travel in to enjoy the music and the company.

Jazz Behind the Green Door began last March, as twenty people were invited to trial the evening of jazz music, community building and a short talk on a contemporary subject.

In the year since then, over seven hundred people have spent an evening listening to music, tapping their toes, and chatting to people they've just met over a glass of wine.

Jazz music is an art form that people become passionate about. It began in America more than a hundred years ago, in the fields where black people worked as slaves and made up songs to pass the time, express themselves and keep alive the culture and traditions of their African homelands. The music they sang and played wasn't known as jazz then, but the way the slaves were playing and singing music was special. By the 1920's, jazz music was growing in popularity with black and white audiences, and with its growing popularity included influences from Europe as well as Africa.

Jazz is like other forms of music in many respects: it has melody (a tune) and rhythm (the beat); but it also has something that other music forms often don't have – improvisation. Jazz musicians don't just follow the notes on a page like classical musicians do; they make it up on

the spot. The main focus is not on technical perfection, rather it is the expression of emotion through being creative and using imagination. Jazz musicians are also creative in their approach to rhythm, with extensive use of syncopation, where they "swing" notes, changing the length of the notes, holding some longer and making others shorter.

Jazz has been the perfect accompaniment to St Stephen's goal of building community in Macquarie Street. The music is the backdrop to a team from the church being creative with story-telling, community building and relationship growing. Jazz Behind the Green Door invites people who are not regular church-goers to come along and experience the church in a new way; where church means being welcomed and included, talking about matters that are important to life, and leaving feeling like you were (even for just an evening) part of a real community.

If you love jazz – Jazz Behind the Green Door is the place for you. If you DON'T love jazz, but think you might like to see what all the fuss is about, you should come along next month. If you want to meet people and make new friends - or even if you are travelling solo and want a place to belong - you'll find it here.

**Jazz Behind the Green Door will next be happening on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April. The doors open at 5:30 pm and there is live music from 6:00 pm. Entry is by donation.**



# NARROMINE



Sippel's family farm at Narromine in 1987. Salt bush is very water efficient: seven litres of water/kilo of dry matter as compared to 23 litres of water/kilo of lucerne. We were told that you haven't tasted lamb until you have eaten salt-bush raised lamb.

Alan and I are very much looking forward to being back in the community and seeing just how things stand now. Some from St Stephen's congregation have visited Narromine on two different occasions, and so

**A**s you are reading this edition of *Vision*, Alan and I will be in Narromine, our fifth visit to this country community. Located a half-hour's drive west of Dubbo and with a population just under 4,000, Narromine is in a rich agricultural area of the Central West. The church is lay-led and this, coupled with the drought, has put extra burdens on the congregation. You will remember that St Stephen's supported a local school with a donation that allowed the children to attend an overnight excursion into Dubbo.

Summer has been scorching, with Dubbo's top temperature averaging 39°. In the Central West 29.2 per cent of the region is in intense drought, 67.6 per cent in drought, and 3.2 per cent drought affected. Because it is so dry, dust storms have been a regular occurrence as any little bit of wind picks up the dust. One of our friends has completely given up cleaning in his home – it is no sooner clean than the dust is back in again, even with all the doors and windows closed. And air-conditioners plus fans are not touching the heat. Farmers in Narromine Shire have been unable to plant grazing and other crops because of dire ongoing dry conditions. Those with canola crops are having a particularly difficult time.

However, ingenuity prevails for those running cattle and sheep. Last time we were in Narromine we visited a friend who lived next door to a salt-bush farm. I had always thought salt-bush was a weed. Not so. With an ability to survive in low rainfall areas, while still producing very high grazing performance, salt-bush was first planted on Ben and father Andrew

far Narromine people have come to Sydney once. Their second visit to the city is imminent: Friday 31 May – Sunday 2 June. A draft program is in place, and some people have offered their homes as billet accommodation – though we're not yet sure if we have sufficient. Please do plan to set aside that weekend to join in the activities with our Narromine friends, so you can meet some of our country family and hear their stories. In particular, we anticipate that there will be a luncheon at the Church after worship on the Sunday, and would love as many as possible of our congregation to stay to be with and get to know our guests.

Just a brief note for those St Stephen's people who visited the Narromine Aviation Museum. The builder of the Wright Flyer, Eric Hayden, recently passed away. Eric dreamed of building a replica of the Wright plane and received a government grant to do so. When the plane was completed Buzz Aldrin came to Narromine to dedicate the Wright Flyer, *The Spirit of Flight*, in honour of 100 years of flight.

**Lauris Harper**



# Nico in France & Germany

## Studying at the Freiburg Musik Hochschule – and playing the organ in Notre Dame, Paris

It's a pleasure to be back at St Stephen's after having been away for seven months. In my previous *Vision* article, I talked about my experiences travelling and attending organ academies in Europe over the European summer. My exchange in Freiburg began after I wrote that article, so I am happy to share those experiences with you now.

The Freiburg Musik Hochschule was a playground of opportunities for organists, and I am very glad I had the chance to study there for a semester of my degree. They have two full-time organ teachers, a number of specialist organ teachers who teach part-time, and more than 20 organ students in total. Unlike Sydney Con, most organ students at the Freiburg Hochschule do a degree in church music, and take classes on theology and liturgy to complement their studies of organ. I took classes in organ building, French and Spanish organ music history, fugue improvisation, Gregorian Chant, and chamber music with historical instruments. In addition to these classes, I had weekly organ lessons with Prof. Matthias Maierhofer, who is also the main organist at the Freiburg Münster.

Outside of my studies at the Hochschule, I also took the opportunity to visit a number of organs in the region. I played most of the organs of Freiburg, visited the Silbermann organs in Villingen and Riegel, and visited museums and organ workshops in Waldkirch, Bruchsal, and Basel (Switzerland). I also had the privilege to hear and play the organ at Notre Dame in Paris, France over a weekend in February, as well as visit several other notable organs in the city, including the organs at St Sulpice and St Trinité.

During my stay in Freiburg, I attended weekly services at the Freiburg Anglican Church, which became my home church for the semester. They are a very supportive community of English speakers, and it was great to get to know their minister, Rev. Christopher from Canada, as well as the organist and musician Helen Rose, who moved to Germany from Sydney many years ago and was a good friend of mine during my stay. I played often for Sunday services at the Church, as well as their traditional Nine Lessons and Carols and Christmas services in December, and some concerts.

Again, it is a pleasure to be back at St Stephen's, and I've enjoyed seeing familiar faces as well as some new ones. Thank you again for your pastoral and financial support, which helped make my overseas study possible. I look forward to sharing what I've learnt overseas, and continuing to share God's gift of music with St Stephen's.

*Nico Tjoelker*

Holding the keys to Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris; at Notre Dame organ;

Playing the Cavaille-Coll practice organ Freiburg Musik; Benedictine church, Villingen.



# The back page

Sunday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Friday
10:00am Worship	1:00pm Reflection, prayer, scripture (recommencing 29 January)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month  5:30 – 7:00pm Jazz, supper, soul  4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month  6:00pm – 7:00pm Worship, prayer (mission, healing, the city), music, communion	1:10pm – 1:50pm  Friday Music (recommencing 25 January)



## The Cockatoo Run

## Next Social Outing

Why not join us on the Cockatoo Run, hauled by heritage diesel locomotives and featuring our beautifully restored and maintained carriages. This heritage train operates a return tour from Sydney through to Robertson and Moss Vale via Wollongong.

The Cockatoo Run commences its journey in Sydney and travels along the spectacular Illawarra route to Wollongong. The journey from Sydney offers spectacular coastal scenery prior to the ascent of the Illawarra Escarpment.

The line climbs 600 metres through rainforests, past waterfalls, and the spectacular viaduct on the line. The train makes a stop at Summit Tank to admire the view over Lake Illawarra out towards the Tasman Sea. The historic Southern Highland township of Robertson with its old town atmosphere and the rustic appeal is generally a great tourist stopover in which to spend some time and enjoy lunch. Return journey will be via Moss Vale to Central via the Illawarra.

<b>WHEN</b>	Wednesday 1 May 2019
<b>WHERE</b>	Sydney to Robertson and Moss Vale via Wollongong
<b>LUNCH</b>	At a restaurant in Robertson
<b>COST</b>	Single adult—\$110 Couple adult—\$110 each Senior—\$95
<b>CONTACT</b>	Judith 0413 786

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